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Calgary metro

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metroNEWS

Boston goalie Anton Khudobin makes a save against the Flames' Alex Chiasson.
JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

FLAMED OUT

Calgary win streak record remains at 10 after 5-2 loss to Bruins metroSPORTS

Closing in on arena site

NHL

Flames prez says they've been meeting regularly on Plan B

Darren Krause
Metro | Calgary

It wasn't visiting NHL commissioner Gary Bettman with the latest sound bite on a new downtown Calgary arena — it was Flames president Ken King.

In the opening address to a crowd at the Chrysler Club at the Scotiabank Saddledome for the Commissioner's luncheon Wednesday, King told the audience they've been working closely with the city on a Plan B — or the Victoria Park option. It's the clearest indication yet of a potential future location for a new arena for the Calgary Flames, though not an entirely new one.

King said they were asked to consider this option last year and noted they'd been meeting with the city nearly every Thursday since last October, with some progress.

"Sometimes these things move along more slowly than we'd like, but good things never come easy," King told the crowd.

Earlier this year, the Calgary Municipal Land Corporation announced that a new, $150 million Victoria Park master plan was in the works, and in early March councillors were talking about a "cultural and entertainment district" referenced in a city document. There was no clear indication that a new arena would be part of that plan.

For his part, Bettman held little back in extolling the virtues of Edmonton's new Rogers Place arena, which he toured the evening prior. "I knew the plans, I'd seen it under construction, but the final result was beyond my imagination," Bettman said of the crown jewel in Edmonton's new Ice District. "No knock on (the Saddledome), but it is old, and the ways these buildings get built has changed dramatically since this one was built back in the early 80s."

Bettman told reporters Wednesday afternoon that he wanted to help keep the Flames and the city on the same page in new arena talks.

Executive order President Trump's revised Muslim ban also put on hold metroNEWS

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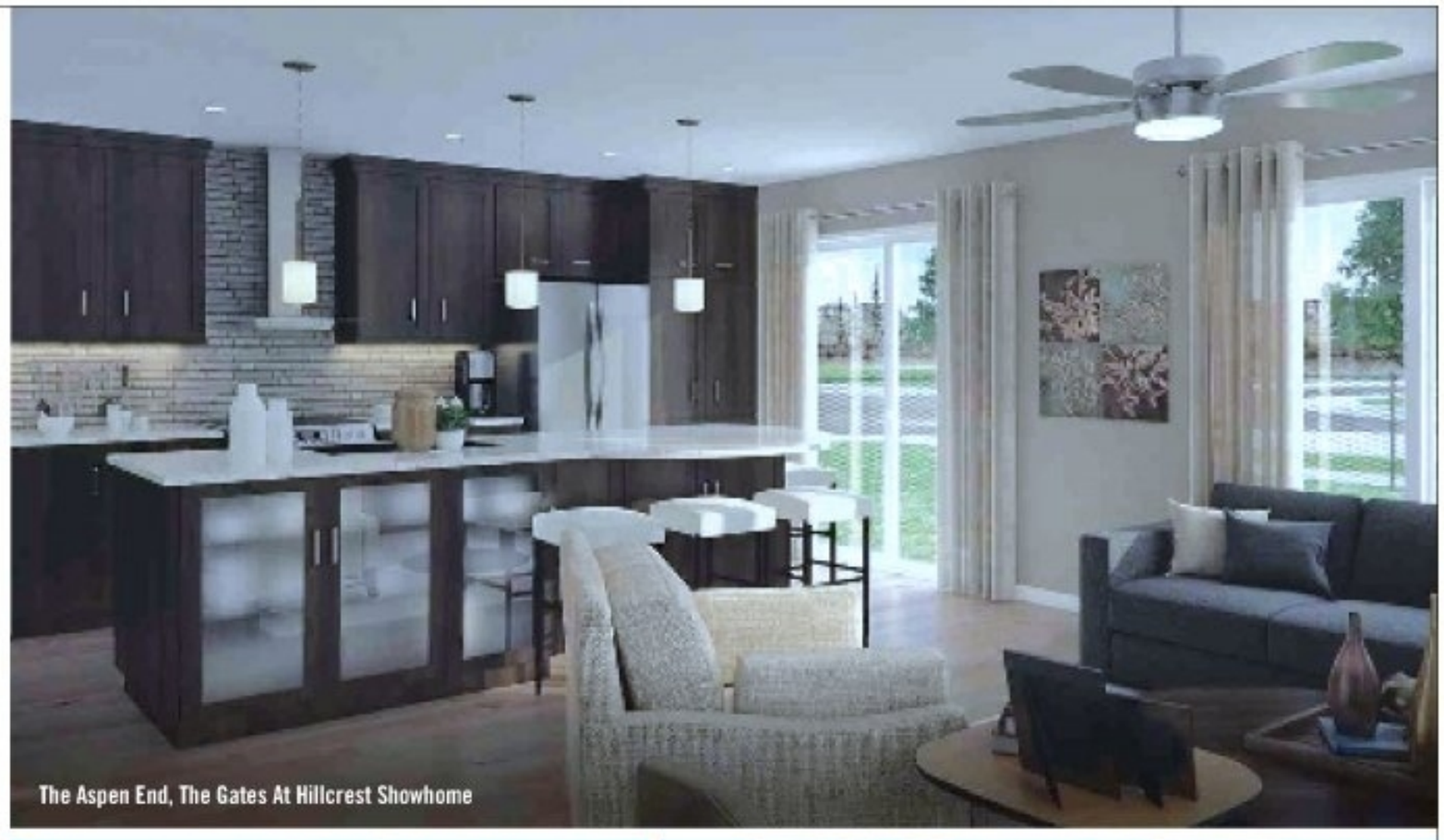
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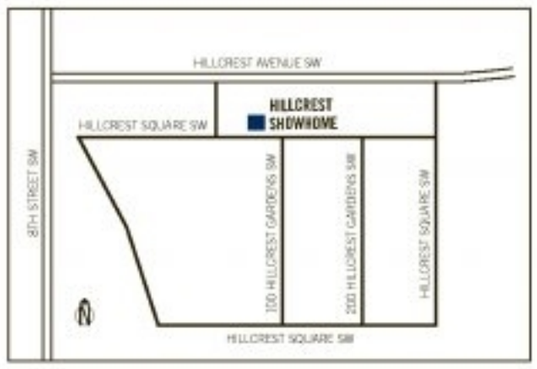

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Your essential daily news

The RCMP want your help naming their 13 new puppies.

Tax could be offset by new riders

TRANSIT

Carbon levy will make driving more costly: Economist

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

What's a few cents added to your transit ticket bill between friends?

According to a city report coming before the Transportation and Transit committee on Wednesday, the carbon tax is adding $1.5 million more in fuel this year, and $2.25 million more in 2018 under the provincial carbon levy. The report says those costs equal 15,000 to 22,500 hours of transit service.

Coun. Shane Keating, chair of the committee, is concerned because with transit's declining revenue, he believes the city will have to increase transit fares – which could translate into a decline in ridership.

But University of Calgary economist Trevor Tombe said the carbon tax only increases the cost of a trip by pennies. And while car ownership continues to climb, citizens might look for an alternative route to work and play.

"It's about 2 cents per trip, they wouldn't actually need to adjust average fares that much," said Tombe. "The carbon tax will make driving more expensive by a much higher proportion than it will make riding transit more expensive."

The carbon tax could add $1.5 million to Calgary Transit's fuel bill. CANDICE WARD/METRO

He said since Calgary Transits costs are largely fixed, additional passenger revenue from passes and tickets could offset additional increase due to the carbon costs.

Keating said no matter which way you slice it, an apple is still, an apple. And those who can't afford vehicular travel, and currently can barely afford transit will miss out.

"If you're going to raise costs on the private vehicle that's what the carbon levy does," said Keating. "The more anything costs, the less people can afford it."

He said if the province gave Calgary Transit a rebate, just like they're offering Albertans on light bulbs, transit wouldn't have to worry about millions in added costs.

"We know if the City of Calgary has an increased cost that's in the millions and we don't have the ability to raise fares or tax base, there's only two ways we can deal with it," he said. "Reduce service, meaning less buses going less frequently, or we eliminate some of the low ridership routes."

Brent Wittmeier, press secretary for Environment and Parks Minister Shannon Phillips said transit has many benefits for Albertans, including the reduction of emissions.

"Municipalities like Calgary stand to benefit from a carbon levy, which will help fund investment in renewables, green buildings and transit," Wittmeier said. "That's why $2.2 billion dollars has been set aside under the Climate Leadership Plan for green infrastructure funding like public transit."

But he makes no mention to a rebate specifically for the carbon tax, pointing out the province's other investments in Calgary.

"Last year, municipalities received just over $1.2 billion under the Municipal Sustainability Initiative with $373,850,304 going to the city of Calgary," Wittmeier said.

"This demonstrates our strong commitment to municipalities. We will continue to support municipalities through reinvestments from the carbon levy as they shift to a lower carbon economy and as we move forward with creating a more resilient and diversified economy for Alberta families."

Pilot to explore synthetic diesel

As a transitioning move the city could trade diesel for synthetic while they move towards more a environmentally friendly bus fleet.

On council's floor a proposal was fuelled by thoughts that the city could help reduce Calgary Transit emissions if they moved to a synthetic diesel fuel for their buses.

A motion put forward by Gian-Carlo Carra, and accepted by his colleagues in the Transportation and Transit committee suggested a report to explore the potential costs, funding requirements and emissions benefits using existing infrastructure if the city moved to a different type of fuel.

Mac Logan, the city's transportation boss said it's an idea the city has been approached with before, and that they've seriously considered.

"What I like about it is that it's not a solution, if you will, to our greenhouse gas emissions in the long term, but it's a great transition strategy to reduce emissions," said Logan.

"We can utilize our existing rolling stock...this is completely compatible with it."

HELEN PIKE/METRO

Boards want funds to be predictable

INFRASTRUCTURE

Warn hikes in utilization without funds for new schools

Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

Calgary school boards are hoping the upcoming provincial budget will provide "stable and predictable" funding of new construction and modernizations.

The Calgary Board of Education superintendent of facilities, Dany Breton, said as the city continues to grow so does student enrolment (2,000 new students joined CBE last year).

"It's that predictability — so that we're not going through a time like we've just lived this past school year where we had to produce 20 new schools and modernizations in one year," he said. "Certainly that increases the challenges for orchestrating such a large undertaking."

> **It's that predictability—so that we're not going through a time like we've just lived.**
> Dany Breton

These new learning spaces in the CBE have brought the overall system utilization rate to 82 per cent for the 2016-17 school year, said Breton.

However, the CBE forecasts an enrolment increase in the next five years from our current 119,147 students to 130,404 students.

"If there were to be no new schools announced for the CBE, then according to our projection we anticipate that by September of 2021 our utilization rates will be back up to the high rates they were at last year," he said. "That means 87 per cent utilization across the system with some at 100 per cent and others well above."

Capacity is also an issue the Calgary Catholic School District hopes to see addressed in this budget.

"Although we have new schools in development, we will continue to face significant capacity issues and we will continue to need space to accommodate student growth," said CSSD board chair Cheryl Low.

She said this level of demand is clearly reflected in the recent 2017-2020 CCSD Capital Plan submission.

"In order to meet the needs of our growing population, both new school projects and modernizations need to continue to take place to address our current and future needs," said Low.

The CCSD said they are currently at a 93 per cent utilization rate in their schools—while full is considered 85 per cent — and it's anticipated that CCSD will grow by an additional 5,000 students by 2021.

In the first year of their three-year capital plans the CBE has asked for eight new schools and four modernizations. The CCSD has asked for four modernizations and three new schools.

Sources said Wednesday that the budget provincial budget will fund 10 new schools as well as nine replacement schools and seven modernizations across 15 municipalities.

Superintendent of facilities for the CBE, Dany Breton, said they are hoping for predictable and stable funding for capital projects moving forward. LUCIE EDWARDSON / METRO

CAPITAL PLAN PRIORITIES

PUBLIC BOARD

NEW BUILDS
1. Cranston Elementary: $14,238,000
2. Coventry Hills/Country Hills Village Elementary: $14,238,000
3. Mahogany Elementary: $14,238,000

MODERNIZATION
1. Forest Lawn High School: $24,000,000
2. John G. Diefenbaker High School: $18,000,000

CATHOLIC BOARD

NEW BUILDS
1. Airdrie Elementary Core School + 16 modulars: $20,104,379.40
2. Auburn Bay Elementary School, core + 12 modulars: $15,813,130.68
3. Evanston Elementary School, core + 12 modulars: $15,813,130.68

MODERNIZATION
1. St. Bonaventure School Modernization (SE): $9,837,528.71
2. St. Boniface School Modernization (SE): $4,893,389.25

CBE board chair Joy Bowen-Eyre said they would have liked consultations about Bill 1 regulations to have already begun.. LUCIE EDWARDSON/METRO

BUDGET

Chair decries lack of consultation on Bill 1

The Calgary Board of Education said they were hoping to have had consultations with Alberta Education about Bill 1 prior to the provincial budget release on Thursday, but said at this point they have no timeline.

Earlier this month, the Alberta government announced Bill 1: An Act to Reduce School Fees. They said they would be funding Bill 1 through efficiencies identified elsewhere in government.

Should the bill pass, Alberta parents will no longer have to pay school fees for things like instructional supplies (textbooks, workbooks, photocopying, printing or paper supplies), or for eligible students who take the bus to their designated schools.

Alberta Education said they'd be holding consultations with school boards to make regulations, as it will affect if/how much they charge in school fees.

Joy Bowen-Eyre, chair for the CBE's board of trustees said after two technical briefings done by teleconference calls with all school boards they still have "more questions then answers."

"To be honest it's still the devil in the details as we await the regulations. We have had no official call-out to boards in relation to consultations periods or meetings," she said. "We're anxiously awaiting that."

Alberta Education told Metro they'd be consulting with school boards before the regulations are in place, but not before funding is announced Thursday.

Bowen-Eyre said specifically in terms of transportation, they've done extensive consultations with parents in regards to service levels.

"We're just wondering where that leaves us, because what we heard from our parents seems to be in contradiction to what is being presented in Bill 1," she said.

Bowen-Eyre said they're "anxious" to hear the budget Thursday. LUCIE EDWARDSON/METRO

> **It's still the devil in the details as we await the regulations. We have had no official call-out to boards in relation to consultationsx**
> Joy Bowen-Eyre

EDUCATION

Alberta private schools not expecting province to cut funding

Despite calls from Alberta unions and union supporters to defund private schools in the province, one Calgary private school says they've received no indication from the government anything of likes will happen at Thursday's annual budget announcement.

Dr. Neil Webber, founder and headmaster of Webber Academy, said he hasn't heard any information that would lead him to believe Alberta Education will be pulling private/independent school funding.

"The only thing I can go by is what the minister has said publicly and I don't anticipate he's going to do anything in this budget that would reduce funding to private schools," he said.

Webber said he doesn't anticipate an increase in funding, but rather that the budget will stick to the status quo.

Progress Alberta (PA) and many Alberta unions have been calling for defunding of private schools over the last few weeks. A petition on the PA website has more than 1,100 signatures calling for the defunding.

> **Alberta has the most expensive private school system in Canada.**
> Progress Alberta

"Alberta has the most expensive private school system in Canada," said PA. "It's time to stop publicly subsidizing private schools and invest in public education."

By removing public taxpayer subsidies of private schools PA said the province "can invest in further reducing school fees, reducing class sizes and ensuring that no child goes hungry at school."

The Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta said they "strongly reject this proposal, and the flawed premise it is based on."

"Independent schools serve the public good. Collectively the independent schools and early childhood service programs provide a quality education to 34,000 Albertan children," said AISCA. " In the last 5 years alone it is estimated that independent schools have saved tax payers over $750,000,000.00."

Webber echoed this sentiment, saying that students at Webber receive less than half (approx.. $5,200) of the provincial funding a public school student receives (approx.. $13,000).

He said not only do they receive less funding, but he believes private schools save the province money as they pay for all their own capital expenditures and building maintenance. LUCIE EDWARDSON/METRO

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Tyler Tailby said after an appointment in February he returned to a smashed hood and fender caused by falling ice from the CCSD building. He said at the time no signs were in place.

ELIZABETH CAMERON / FOR METRO

Board's insurance won't cover damage

Man says his car was smashed by falling ice on school property

Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

A Calgary man says the insurance company for the Calgary Catholic School District told him it was an "act of God" when ice fell off their downtown building onto his parked car, damaging the hood.

Tyler Tailby said he was at an appointment at the CCSD building — which houses a dental office and medical clinic/chiropractic office — in February and had parked his car in a stall next to the building.

"After my appointment I came out and my hood was smashed in and my fender was smashed in because of ice that had fallen off the roof," he said. "Pretty significant damage. They have to replace the hood and may have to replace the fender as well."

Tailby said he immediately informed a building manager who took his information and came out and took photos of the damage, adding that there were no signs in the lot warning people of falling ice.

"When I heard from their insurance company, they said we would have to prove that they were negligent in some way and that they can't clean the roof because it's a dome-shaped building with no access to the roof," he said.

Tailby said he's been estimated around $2,500 to fix his vehicle.

Metro reached out to CCSD's insurance company, Traveler's Insurance, who told Metro they couldn't comment on "insurance matters."

According to Tailby his insurance company also said it'd be "very unlikely" they'd be able to prove CCSD did anything wrong. Metro also reached out to Tailby's insurer Wawanesa, which didn't return Metro's inquiry.

> **They should step up and pay for this. It was dangerous.**
> Tyler Tailby

Despite CCSD's insurer denying negligence, Tailby said he was surprised when he returned to the building in March to find "shiny brand-new signs" warning of falling ice.

Spokeswoman for CCSD Karen Ryhorchuk said when a concern is brought to their attention they try to be proactive in dealing with it. In this case they had new signs made.

Tailby said he was warned by reception at his chiropractor's office that they'd seen falling ice on that side of the building — advising him to park further away — but Tailby said if it's an ongoing issue CCSD should pay.

"They should step up and pay for this. It was dangerous ice from their property," he said.

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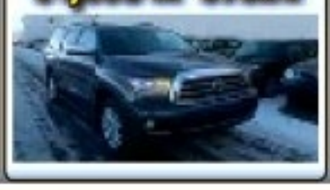

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Councillors are enjoying long careers

POLITICIANS

Cause is low municipal awareness, report finds

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Don't let councillors bum around: Be informed and vote them out.

A University of Calgary School of Public Policy released a report Tuesday that suggested municipal politicians enjoy long stretches of leadership with little threat of being voted out or replaced, unless a councillor steps down.

That means council voices often create a chorus, and form predictable patterns — hence why they can't agree on secondary suites.

"There's no turnover, there's incredible stability," said researcher Anthony Sayers. He mentioned in Edmonton there's a 95 per cent chance a ward representative will be re-elected.

"It's incredible."

He said 100 years ago, councillors used to have a five-year career, but that's gone up to about 15 years.

Coun. Druh Farrell refuted the report, saying she gets a lot done in her role as the Ward 7 representative, and one of the longest standing members of council.

"What we should really be looking at is campaign finance reform, that probably has more influence in whether or not you're representing your constituents," said Farrell.

"We have members of council who have been here for some time and are still excited about their work — others less."

She said the longevity of a councillor's career doesn't affect whether or not they challenge old ideas and dig into controversy.

But Sayers said their findings show that council's narratives are often predictable and based on working together.

"Is there good things about that? Well, maybe," Sayers said. "You get people who have good experience and you know their name … on the other hand it means that the incentives are quite different…they tend to work as a team, like a corporate body."

Sayers suggests council operates on a low information environment, the public doesn't pay attention to what's happening, and those elected don't have an interest to raise a stink.

"What comes with that is much less information about what they're doing," Sayers said. "Do we think the extra friction that comes with partisan politics is worth the extra knowledge that comes with that?"

Sayers said it's not quite clear.

Joe Ceci presents a new pair of soccer shoes to Yusef Moalim which represent a more affordable lifestyle for families with the upcoming budget. JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

BUDGET

Politicians spar over spending

The Wildrose party says with the government signalling more spending coming in Thursday's budget, Alberta needs a panel of steely-eyed critics to cut costs, similar to the TV show "Dragons' Den."

"Most politicians, we all think we're the smartest guy in the room but most of the time in fact we're not. We need to bring in experts to help us with this," Opposition MLA Derek Fildebrandt said Wednesday.

His proposed fiscal reform commission would be a mix of politicians, public service and business experts similar to a program run by the former federal Conservative government, he said.

"I sort of envision it somewhat almost as a fiscal "Dragons' Den" where government programs, where the way we are doing things, they're all going to have to be challenged," said Fildebrandt.

Fildebrandt said a Wildrose government could save $2.6 billion this year in operational savings, including $1.2 billion by cutting the broad-based carbon tax.

But Premier Rachel Notley called the concept nonsensical and demeaning to those affected.

"The Wildrose want to turn Albertans' future into a reality TV show," Notley told the legislature during question period.

"How about (the TV show) "Survivor?" Tune in next week to see who the Wildrose kicks off the island. Will it be seniors? Will it be students? Will it be people in hospital? Who are they gonna throw off the island?"

"Albertans are going to throw the NDP government off the island in the next election," Wildrose Leader Brian Jean retorted.

All opposition parties say it's time Notley's government injects fiscal reality into budget deficits that have ballooned as falling oil revenues sap billions of dollars out of the bottom line.

In the fiscal year that ends this month, Alberta is on track for a $10.8-billion deficit to pay for capital and operating expenses against $42.9 billion in revenue.

Alberta is on track to exceed $30 billion in debt this year against $19.7 billion in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Debt payments exceed $1 billion this year.

Ceci promised this week that the budget, will "bend the curve" on spending.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Moving bus barns could bring Greenline options

PUBLIC TRANSIT

City breakdown will show what move would mean for project

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

After marked concern from the Ramsay community about a last-minute resurfacing of a previously shelved alignment, it seems there may be more options to explore.

Weeks ago residents were surprised as the city sent out flyers to more than 60 homes detailing plans the community thought were off the table.

The city said it had to reconsider an alignment bringing the Green Line from the Victoria Park area through Ramsay via MacDonald Street, instead of around the bus barns and up 9 Avenue as previously talked about.

The main reason administration told Ramsayites and council that they wanted to explore bringing the Green Line through the community was because of some sharp and challenging turns around the Victoria Park Bus Barns and operational issues with having the Green Line interrupt Calgary Transit bus schedules.

But those bus barns have been on the outs for some time.

"We've been talking about getting rid of those bus barns since I've been elected," said Coun. Druh Farrell. "I mean, they're a blight."

Coun. Richard Potmans said he understood there was a huge challenge to move the barns, because inner-city land wasn't readily available.

Mac Logan, the city's transportation boss said it's not a matter of if they're going to be moved, it's when.

"We have to put the whole picture together for the line," said Logan.

He said it's a matter of creating a plan about how much moving the barns – combined with the line and the available funding – would be, so council can make the decision. And they are going to do that. But he noted it's important to see what the benefit is, which the city needs to work in conjunction with CMLC and Remington to establish.

What he did note to Pootmans is that there are locations the city is eyeing to move the bus barns in at least two "inner city" sites physically capable of housing the barn and at least one of those options is being explored for council.

"I don't believe that we will drive things along the MacDonald Avenue straight through," said Coun. Gian-Carlo Carra. "I think that the process will reveal it's not the best outcome."

Ultimately the report before committee didn't prescribe any sort of decision, but Coun. Andre Chabot thanked all those who came forward, as he said their thoughts and feeling solidifies the city's work.

Erin Joslin holds a map of Ramsay, one of the city's oldest neighbourhoods. The City of Calgary has changed their tune on the Green Line alignment, and are now considering sending a CTrain straight through the community cutting it in half. METRO STAFF

> **We've been talking about getting rid of those bus barns since I've been elected.** Councillor Druh Farrell

TRANSIT

Fee could help offset ticket costs

While Calgary Transit takes a step into the future with a committee-approved mobile payment plan, the increased cost had some councillors raising their eyebrows.

On Tuesday, the Transportation and Transit committee voted in favour of recommendations to bring forward a mobile transit payment system to Calgary within a year.

The city is calculating the new system will cost them more to collect the same amount of money. The upfront investment sits at $5 million, and it will cost $2.4 million annually to run. But Coun. Shane Keating is suggesting there's a balance the city can strike to help pay for the increased cost, for the convenience of a mobile fare.

"Every time we do something it increases the costs, but can you add a transaction fee to this for anyone who wants the convenience?" said Keating. "That's a possibility that they would have a two or three cent increase — it's the same thing when you go to an ATM."

In the U.S., the service has been ongoing for some time. Some jurisdictions like Dallas have had their mobile ticketing service live since 2013.

Paul Rose, spokesman for the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, said it's too soon for them to establish what the mobile payment will do to their fare collection and revenues. They introduced their mobile app in 2015. Although they already have a tap-and-go style system, Rose said the app was introduced as a way to capture the occasional users, tourists and even help reduce costs through enforcement.

HELEN PIKE/METRO

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Michael and Willemina Montgomery demo the VR headset, which allows people to walk through the house and look at the nooks and crannies without leaving the office space. AARON CHATHA/METRO

Virtual realty a reality

TECHNOLOGY

House hunters can explore 20 locations in an afternoon

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

A pair of Calgary real-estate brokers are streamlining the home-hunting process using virtual reality.

Michael and Willemina Montgomery, the couple behind Renzo Real Estate, are taking advantage of advances in VR technology to help sell homes.

"Right now, it's very time-consuming to ask buyers and agents to go look at houses," said Willemina. "Say there's 20 potential houses they're interested in. A lot of them, they might walk through the door and in 10 seconds realize this doesn't work. So you've wasted all that time."

The Montgomerys have now incorporated VR as part of their routine. When they go to take pictures of a new listing, they also film it for the VR software. That means filming room by room with a 360-degree camera.

House hunters can drop by the office, strap on a headset and virtually explore the ins-and-outs of 20 homes in a single afternoon.

It then becomes a process of elimination. If a client doesn't like a wall placement, the location of the bathroom or the popcorn ceiling, those homes get eliminated. They then set up appointments to see the remaining homes in-person.

> **It's very time-consuming to ask buyers and agents to go look at houses.**
> Willemina Montgomery

"They're experiencing the homes and then going out and having a more thorough conversation about the homes," explained Michael.

Michael has been in realty for five years, while Willemina has eight years under her belt, and they see VR becoming a standard part of a realtor's toolset in the next five to 10 years.

Although the technology has been around for a while, it was previously too expensive to consider using in a commercial environment like theirs. Now, VR goggles can be purchased to work with an iPhone or Android device.

The couple decided to become early adopters after seeing the potential in other sectors and in the media.

They hope it will also be a boon to people moving to Calgary. If they have their own headset, they can see the homes available before flying down for a closer look at the ones they like.

ICEFIELDS PARKWAY

Snowshoers presumed dead in avalanche

Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

Following a Tuesday avalanche on the Icefields Parkway north of Lake Louise, Parks Canada is leading a recovery operation for two missing snowshoers presumed dead.

Cpl. Curtis Peters of the Lake Louise RCMP said they don't believe anyone survived the avalanche.

"When we say rescue, that is a good sign. When we say recovery, it's not good news," he told Metro on Wednesday afternoon.

According to Parks Canada on Tuesday, visitor-safety specialists were asked by the RCMP to begin a search for two people reported missing after failing to check out of their accommodations.

RCMP said they located the missing snowshoers' rental vehicle at a trailhead north of Lake Louise on Highway 93 and quickly realized the pair had been caught in a nearby avalanche.

"We were able to ascertain they were likely in the avalanche, and we know that based on snowshoe tracks heading into the avalanche debris and no snowshoe tracks coming out of that debris," said Parks Canada spokeswoman Tania Peters.

The avalanche risk in the area is currently high, and it isn't possible to safely put rescuers into the site, said Peters.

"Parks Canada is hopeful that conditions will improve over the coming days so that a ground search can take place," she said.

Peters said Parks Canada successfully completed a fly-over of the area Tuesday evening around 4 p.m., and they located two avalanche transceiver signals.

"That's the best estimate we have as to where these individuals are buried within the debris," said Peters. "We're making every effort to get into the area and conduct a search as safely and efficiently as possible."

Parks Canada and the RCMP said their thoughts are with the families of the victims. They said the families of the missing people have been notified and their identities will not be released.

Gamergirls trek around the world

FASHION

Designers find international success with retro tech dress

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

The Gamergirls dress made its first appearance last year at Calgary MakeFashion 2016. Created by Phi: Illuminated Design, it's since toured runways across the world. AARON CHATHA/METRO

A year after debuting their Gamergirls dresses at Make-Fashion 2016, three Calgary designers are literally lighting up runways around the world.

The two dresses are covered in about 400 LED lights and link to a phone via Bluetooth. They can play 8-bit video games using the other person's dress as a screen, with the score indicated by lights and colours on the shoulder pads.

Since showing off the tech a year ago, the three artists behind Phi: Illuminated Design have been invited to tour the dress internationally, including in Shanghai, Rome, Vegas, Xiamen and, this summer, Dublin.

"To see the attention we've got, especially internationally, has been a big surprise. It's been a fantastic experience to travel for your art and with your art," said Kenzie Housego.

She created the dress with Stacey Morgan and Sophie Amin, making use of the team's wide variety of skills — one's a programmer, another works with fibres, and so on.

The Gamergirls dresses were an exploration of femininity within gamer culture in a playful and visual way.

It's not the only tech dress of theirs that's made waves; the trio created a cocktail dress that uses lights to create shooting stars across the garment. It's also toured at different fashion shows and was worn by Discovery Channel host Ziya Tong at a public fundraiser.

Housego feels that, as electronics become smaller and more affordable, wearable tech will be a place full of innovative and playful experimentation. And it's slowly making its way into the mainstream: Chanel has made an LED purse, and Claire Danes stole the spotlight at last year's Met Gala with a fibre-optic dress that appeared to glow in the dark.

"I think it could potentially become part of our daily lives," she explained. "Fashion is all about self-expression, and incorporated electronics and technology is just another way of telling a story."

Phi will be unveiling their newest dress at this year's MakeFashion event on April 1. It's inspired by Canada's landscape, with a skirt that lights up when the model faces north.

DEVELOPMENT

Redwood Meadows supports opposition to Springbank dam

Days after the nearby Tsuut'ina Nation nixed the idea of the Springbank off-stream reservoir, the mayor of Redwood Meadows is throwing her support behind a different option.

Last week, Tsuut'ina Chief Lee Crowchild said concerns over the impact of the so-called Springbank Dry Dam on Nation land, and the fact consent was not sought by the Alberta government, were the primary reasons for their opposition.

The proposed location of the Springbank Off-Stream Reservoir, according to the Alberta government, is 15 kilometres west of Calgary near Springbank Road, north of the Elbow River and east of Highway 22.

On Wednesday, Redwood Meadows Mayor Liz Erasmus aligned with the Tsuut'ina Nation against the Springbank project.

In a statement, Erasmus outlined unknown impacts of the diversion gates placed three kilometres from Tsuut'ina, possible groundwater effects from water storage and pollutants or airborne contaminants from a possible flood event.

"We support and share the goals of flood mitigation for Tsuut'ina, neighboring municipalities and our quasi-municipality. But we insist it be done with respect and in accordance with the government's consultation obligations to both the non-aboriginal and aboriginal communities within the impacted area," the statement read. METRO

HARD POWDER

Liam Neeson film to shoot in B.C.

A movie denied permission to film in Alberta's mountain national parks is now on location in British Columbia.

"We have moved four to five days into B.C. for now," said Mark Voyce, unit manager for the film Hard Powder.

Voyce said staff for the movie are looking for extras for several days of filming in Fernie and Cranbrook.

Hard Powder had originally applied to Parks Canada for permits to film in several parts of the Rocky Mountain national parks in Alberta, including Banff, the Lake Louise townsite and ski hill, and the Columbia Icefields.

Weeks before the crew was scheduled to begin filming, Parks Canada turned them down.

A letter from the agency listed eight deficiencies in their application, although staff with the production company said most of those questions had been answered in the original application.

Parks Canada officials later acknowledged the film's plot was a concern.

Action star Liam Neeson is to play an honest snowplow driver whose son is murdered by a local drug kingpin. He then seeks to dismantle the cartel, but his efforts spark a turf war involving a First Nations gang boss, played by Indigenous actor, musician and Order of Canada member Tom Jackson.

Parks Canada said concerns over the fact the gang leader was indigenous was "an important factor in the agency's final decision."

The movie's producer Michael Shamberg — whose previous credits include Erin Brockovich, A Fish Called Wanda and Get Shorty — said the crew planned to spend almost $5 million in Banff and Jasper over the course of the shoot. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jo-Anne Reynolds launched SpikeBee to help parents put kids in more engaging activities. ELIZABETH CAMERON/FOR METRO

Bee more active, kids

START-UP

SpikeBee market place moving quickly forward

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

Alberta's top accelerator program has chosen the 15 most promising startups from the province to take part this year — including Calgary's SpikeBee.

SpikeBee is an online platform where companies can list activities like camps, classes and events, for kids.

Jo-Anne Reynolds launched the company in 2015, with five local camps. A straightforward idea, it grew faster than Reynolds could have anticipated.

Within the first few weeks, Nike called her up with a partnership offer, using SpikeBee as a go to for their camps — and not just the Calgary ones.

"That just blew us away. They had hundreds of events, camps and programs. It was so overwhelming, but so exciting," said Reynolds.

"We hit the ground running from there and haven't stopped."

Two years later, they've listed around 25,000 activities from 400 companies. SpikeBee makes its money from a 3.99 per cent transaction fee, but they also give back 10 per cent of those fees to non-profits.

Although Reynolds currently runs the company with her husband, she was a single mother when the idea first occurred to her.

Having just landed in Calgary from South Africa, by way of England, her daughter was eager to join a fashion camp, and find new and cool interests. Reynolds began searching everywhere for information, and was frustrated that it was pretty much all over the map on the net.

It was that experience that inspired her to bring together all that information, and present it in a way that parents could find events that fit within their budgets and schedules (which was especially important as a single mom).

She hopes to use the AccelerateAB experience to increase awareness about SpikeBee and help it grow. The accelerator includes a full day of mentorship, and a pitch contest next month.

Calgary chefs return to culinary contest

TOP CHEF CANADA: ALL-STARS

Competitors were fan faves in their respective seasons on show

Dan Clapson
For Metro | Calgary

Things are about to get heated in the kitchen between two of Calgary's most well-known chefs, but it's all for the sake of healthy competition.

On Wednesday, Food Network Canada announced the 12 Canadian chefs who will take part in Top Chef Canada: All-Stars, including Connie Desousa of Charcut/Charbar and Nicole Gomes of Nicole Gourmet Catering and Cluck 'N' Cleaver.

Desousa was a competitor on the original season of the series, which aired more than six years ago. Since then, she has become a household name in the Canadian food scene and one of the most recognizable faces of Alberta cuisine. Her two restaurants have been celebrated locally and nationally.

Nicole Gomes still runs her successful boutique catering company. Cluck 'N' Cleaver, her fried-chicken concept that she owns with her sister, just celebrated its first birthday last month.

"When the producers first asked me, I didn't say yes right away," said Gomes, who appeared on Season 3 of the popular culinary competition series in 2013 and finished in fifth place. "Being on Top Chef Canada is a crazy whirlwind, but I'm glad I decided to compete again!"

Both chefs were very popular with viewers in their respective seasons and garnered huge fan bases in Calgary as a result.

When the series premieres on April 2, no doubt Calgary food fans will be rooting for both the talented women. If you need a place to watch the action, Gomes will hold a fundraiser premiere party at National on 10th, with proceeds going toward Foothills Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

"Filming the show a second time was still nerve-wracking," Gomes said candidly. "But I came back just wanting to (put my head down and) cook and that I needed to just cook what I knew. You should never try and reinvent the wheel on this show."

DETAILS

Top Chef Canada: All-Stars premieres April 2 at 8 p.m. (MT). Tickets for the premiere party are available at eventbrite.com.

Calgary chefs Connie Desousa, left, and Nicole Gomes will compete in the Top Chef Canada: All-Stars. CONTRIBUTED

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A Canadian, three Russians and Yahoo

LEGAL

Young man allegedly paid to access hacked accounts

Karim Baratov, a dual national of Kazakhstan and Canada, was arrested as one of four suspects in a massive hack of Yahoo emails, Toronto police said. INSTAGRAM

A 22-year-old Kazakh-Canadian man with expensive taste is facing charges of identity theft and conspiracy to commit computer fraud in connection with one of the biggest data breaches ever — the theft of 500 million Yahoo user accounts in early 2014.

Karim Baratov, a dual national of Kazakhstan and Canada, was arrested on Tuesday morning at his home in Ancaster, Ont. by Toronto Police and handed over to the RCMP, according to police spokesperson Mark Pugash.

Baratov is accused of being paid by two Russian spies to break into the email accounts of targeted individuals, according to a release from the U.S. Department of Justice.

The two members of the Russian intelligence agency FSB, Dmitry Dokuchaev, 33, and Igor Sushchin, 43, and Russian hacker Aleksey Belan, 29, who was on the FBI's most wanted cyber criminals list and has been previously indicted twice for computer fraud, are facing more serious charges of criminal espionage, computer hacking and conspiracy-related offences after being indicted along with Baratov by a grand jury in northern California at the end of February.

The stolen information from the Yahoo hack was used to break into the email accounts of Russian journalists, U.S. and Russian government officials and employees in private-sector companies, according to the Justice Department release. Belan allegedly used the access to the 500 million email accounts for "personal financial gain."

Baratov's alleged involvement in the hacking conspiracy between January 2014 and December 2016 is detailed in an indictment filed with a San Francisco court. None of the charges have been proven in court.

Carmelo Truscello, who answered the phone at the office of Baratov's lawyer Amadeo DiCarlo, said that the case is only at its initial stage and that the allegations are unproven.

When a target of interest had an email account other than a Yahoo one, Dokuchaev and Sushchin would assign Baratov to gain access to it, according to the indictment.

Among the targeted individuals were the former Minister of Development of a country bordering Russia and his wife, the assistant to the Deputy Chairman of the Russian Federation, employees of a major Russian cybersecurity firm, Russian officials including one who worked in the bureau that investigates cybercrime, the CEO of a metals mining company in a country bordering Russia, prominent bankers in countries bordering Russia and an International Monetary Fund official.

Some of the email addresses could be accessed because of the Yahoo email hack, through the recovery email account function. Baratov allegedly also used a technique known as "spear phishing" to try and gain access to target email addresses. It entails sending out emails from an apparently trustworthy sender to obtain information like login credentials or infect computers with malware.

Baratov was allegedly paid to obtain unauthorized access to more than 80 email accounts, including 50 Google accounts. He generally charged about $100 (USD) per account and was paid at least $1,000 in "money and other things of value" between April 2015 and 2016, according to the indictment.

If he is convicted, prosecutors will seek a forfeiture order for Baratov's PayPal account and the fancy cars he was well-known for in Ancaster — an Aston Martin DBS with the licence plate "MR KARIM" and a black Mercedes Benz. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

A lavish lifestyle

In the photo, Karim Baratov leans against his sleek black Mercedes, parked next to his vanity-plated Aston Martin in the driveway of his Ancaster home.

In scouring extensive social media accounts that appear to belong to Baratov, examining property records and speaking with neighbours and former classmates, a profile has emerged of the young Canadian of Kazakh origin caught up in this major cross-border digital crime. Social media entries that appear to have been posted by Baratov portray the life of a wealthy young man with money to burn on luxury cars, arm-length tattoos and performance-enhancing workout supplements.

Classmates recalled that Baratov began driving flashy cars and wearing expensive clothes in high school.

"He had the biggest amount of disposable income that I'd ever seen for a person that age," said Jake Hagen, who started going to school with Baratov in Grade 7.

"He bought his friends everything (like) clothes, and he'd take them all out to dinner," Hagen added. "He was a guy who very much understood that he was very well off and that people hung out with him because he had money."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Mortality rate lower among immigrants

RESEARCH

Experts were 'surprised by the magnitude of the difference'

Immigrants are 60 per cent less likely to die during a given time period than native-born Canadians and long-term residents, says a study that examines mortality rates based on immigration and socioeconomic status.

According to the joint study by the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences and the University of Toronto, immigrants had a much lower death rate than non-immigrants, even if they happen to live in the most deprived areas in the province.

The mortality rate, or death rate, is a measure of the number of deaths in the population, typically indicated in units of deaths per 1,000 people over a specific time frame. Immigrants' lower mortality rate translated into 42,700 fewer deaths overall and 18,400 fewer premature deaths during the study period from 2002 to 2012, the study said.

"We were surprised by the magnitude of the difference. It's big and substantial," said UofT epidemiologist Laura Rosella, the lead author of the research paper.

Based on population and demographic databases, as well as census results and immigration records, the study examined the mortality rates across the socioeconomic spectrum among immigrants, native-born Canadians and long-term residents who came here before 1985.

There were 934,765 deaths registered in Ontario during the study period, including 19,501 deaths among female immigrants and 20,514 deaths among male immigrants.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

New Canadians swear the oath of citizenship in Hamilton last year. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CANADA 150 THROWBACK SELFIES Lace up your corset — it's time to snap a mid-19th-century selfie. Ottawa resident Jennifer Rosenthal is converting a trailer into a portrait studio and wardrobe on wheels, where people can model her hand-sewn circa-1867 costumes.

HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

150 WAYS of looking at Canada

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Syrian capital rocked by suicide bombings

CIVIL WAR

At least 30 killed in latest attacks on government-controlled areas

Suicide bombers hit the main judicial building and a restaurant in Damascus Wednesday, killing at least 30 people and spreading fear across Syria's capital as the country's civil war entered its seventh year with no end in sight.

The attacks reflect a renewed effort by militants to use insurgent tactics against President Bashar Assad's forces in a bid to recover lost momentum.

The first attacker, reportedly dressed in a military uniform, struck inside the Justice Palace, located near the famous and crowded Hamidiyeh market. The explosion left bodies lying amid pools of blood and shattered glass in the building's main hall, where a picture of President Bashar Assad hung on one of the walls.

The official news agency, SANA, said another suicide explosion about an hour later struck a restaurant in the Rabweh district of Damascus, an area known for its restaurants and cafés, leading to multiple casualties, mostly women and children. Syrian TV showed overturned plastic chairs and tables at the restaurant with bloodstains on the floor.

The Ikhbariyeh TV channel said the attacker was being chased by security agents when he ran into a restaurant and detonated his explosives' vest there.

The bombings were the latest in a spate of deadly explosions and suicide attacks targeting government-controlled areas in Syria and its capital. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for either attack, but other, similar attacks in recent weeks were claimed by al-Qaida's affiliate in Syria, which has come under pressure lately amid infighting with other insurgent factions in Syria and airstrikes by the U.S.-led coalition.

The al-Qaida branch in Syria, The Levant Liberation Committee, denied responsibility for the attacks late Wednesday. In a statement released on its Telegram channel, it said that its targets are restricted to security and military installations.

The attacks came as Syrians mark the sixth anniversary of the country's civil war, which has killed more than 400,000 people and displaced millions of others. The conflict began in March 2011 as a popular uprising against Assad's rule but quickly descended into a full-blown civil war that has left large parts of the country in ruins. The chaos allowed al-Qaida and later Daesh to gain a foothold in the war-torn nation.

Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF regional director for the Middle East and North Africa, told The Associated Press Wednesday following a three-day trip to Syria that what he has seen is "unprecedented," even in comparison to conflict zones like Yemen, Sudan, Sierra Leone and Rwanda.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"I have never seen a level of destruction so big as I have been seeing over the last few days. UNICEF's Geert Cappelaere

Syrian security forces gather in front of the main judicial building that was attacked by a suicide bomber in Damascus on Wednesday. SANA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

What's next in Brexit?

Britain's Parliament has told Prime Minister Theresa May she can file for divorce from the European Union. She will send the formal letter by the end of March. Then comes the hard part — the arguments, the lawyers, the squabbles over money.

Here's a look at the main issues and what happens next.

What is the EU and why is Britain leaving?

The EU is a bloc of 28 nations sharing relatively open borders, a single market in goods and services and — for 19 nations — a single currency, the euro. Britain joined in 1973 but has been a somewhat reluctant member, with euroskeptic politicians and journalists regularly railing against regulations imposed by EU headquarters in Brussels.

Former Prime Minister David Cameron offered voters a referendum on EU membership, and in June they voted by 52-48 per cent to leave.

How does Britain file for divorce?

A bill passed by Parliament late Monday authorizes the British government to invoke Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, which says a member state may "notify the European Council of its intention" to leave the bloc.

Later this month, May is expected to send the notification in a letter to Council President Donald Tusk and then announce the news, probably to Parliament. That sets a clock ticking: Article 50 says that two years from the moment of notification, "the Treaties shall cease to apply" and Britain will no longer be an EU member.

Whose move is it now?

The EU's Tusk says that once EU officials get Britain's notification, they will respond within 48 hours, offering draft negotiating guidelines for the 27 remaining member states to consider. Leaders of the 27 nations will then meet in April or May to finalize their negotiating platform.

Who conducts the talks?

On the British side, U.K. Brexit Secretary David Davis will take the lead, reporting to May. On the EU side, it's complicated. As Britain's Institute for Government recently pointed out, "the U.K. is negotiating with 27 member states, not a unified bloc." French diplomat Michel Barnier is the chief negotiator for the European Commission, the bloc's executive arm. He'll receive direction from the Council, which represents the leaders of the member states.

What is the most pressing issue?

Britain's vote to leave the EU has meant uncertainty for three million EU citizens living in the U.K., and one million Britons who reside in the 27 other nations of the bloc. Both sides agree that giving such citizens a guarantee that they will be able to stay where they are is a top priority.

What will be the main conflicts?

The first major battle is likely to be about money. The EU says Britain must pay a hefty divorce bill of up to 60 billion euros, to cover EU staff pensions and other expenses the U.K. has committed to. Britain hasn't ruled out a payment, but is sure to quibble over the size of the tab.

There's also likely to be friction over Britain's desire to maintain free trade in goods and services with the bloc, without accepting the EU's core principle of free movement of workers.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

People wait in line to vote in the Dutch general elections in The Hague on Thursday. GETTY IMAGES

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Judge in Hawaii puts Muslim ban on hold

Hours before it was to take effect, President Donald Trump's revised travel ban was put on hold Wednesday by a federal judge in Hawaii after hearing arguments that the executive order discriminates on the basis of nationality.

The ruling came as opponents renewed their legal challenges across the country, asking judges in three states to block the executive order that targets people from six predominantly Muslim countries.

More than half a dozen states are trying to stop the ban, and federal courts in Maryland, Washington state and Hawaii heard arguments about whether it should be put into practice early Thursday.

U.S. District Court Judge Derrick Watson's decision prevents the executive order from going into effect, at least for now. Hawaii had requested a temporary restraining order.

Hawaii also argued that the ban would prevent residents from receiving visits from relatives in the six countries covered by the order. The state says the ban would harm its tourism industry and the ability to recruit foreign students and workers.

In Maryland, attorneys told a federal judge that the measure still discriminates against Muslims.

Government attorneys argued that the ban was revised substantially to address legal concerns, including the removal of an exemption for religious minorities from the affected countries.

The new version of the ban details more of a national security rationale. It is narrower and eases some concerns about violating the due-process rights of travellers.

It applies only to new visas from Somalia, Iran, Syria, Sudan, Libya and Yemen and temporarily shuts down the U.S. refugee program. It does not apply to travellers who already have visas. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dutch reject the far right

VOTE

PM Mark Rutte beats anti-Islam leader Geert Wilders

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on Wednesday claimed a dominating parliamentary election victory over anti-Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders, who failed the year's first litmus test for populism in Europe.

The Netherlands' main exit poll suggested Rutte's party won 31 seats in the 150-member legislature, 12 more than Wilders' party, which shared second place with two other parties.

Following Britain's vote to leave the European Union and Donald Trump's election as U.S. president, "the Netherlands said, 'Whoa! Stop!' to the wrong kind of populism," said Rutte, who is now poised for a third term as prime minister.

"We want to stick to the course we have — safe and stable and prosperous," he added.

Wilders had insisted that whatever the result of the election, the kind of populist politics he and others in Europe represent aren't going away.

"Rutte has not seen the back of me!!" Wilders said in a Twitter message after the exit poll results had sunk in.

Both France and Germany have elections this year in which far-right candidates and parties are hoping to make an impact.

Rutte, who for much of the campaign appeared to be racing to keep pace with Wilders, may have profited from the hard line he drew in a diplomatic standoff with Turkey over the past week.

Under brilliant skies, the Dutch went to vote in huge numbers, with turnout estimated to have reached at 82 per cent.

In a subplot of the elections, the Ipsos exit poll had the Green Left party registering a historic victory, turning it into the largest party on the left wing of Dutch politics for the first time.

The Greens leapt from four seats to 16 in parliament after a strong campaign by charismatic leader Jesse Klaver, who invites comparisons to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, according to the exit poll. "This is a fantastic result for us," Green Left chairwoman Marjolein Meijer said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dutch vote only the first step

The Dutch vote is likely to resonate across borders, even though local campaign issues differ. Here's a look at Europe's upcoming electoral battlegrounds:

FRANCE

French far-right leader Marine Le Pen has set the tone for the campaign for France's election with her anti-immigrant and anti-globalization program.

Le Pen argues that Muslim immigration and economic globalization are destroying France's identity, and polls suggest she could advance to the second round of France's election, set for April 23 and May 7.

GERMANY

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, seen abroad as a bulwark of tolerance, is seeking re-election in September.

Committed to European unity, Merkel's conservatives face a challenge from the nationalist Alternative for Germany party.

ITALY

Italy is facing a national parliamentary election in 2018 unless anti-establishment parties succeed in getting earlier polling, after pro-EU Premier Matteo Renzi resigned following the failure of a reforms referendum in December. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Banking practices probed

FINANCE

Employees say customers are being pressured

In a CBC program aired last week, TD employees spoke out about feeling "incredible pressure" to meet "unrealistic" sales targets by signing customers up for unnecessary financial products. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Ottawa has launched an investigation into the business practices of Canada's financial institutions after allegations that big banks have been pressuring and even "tricking" customers into buying their products and services.

The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada — an independent government agency that enforces consumer protection legislation — announced Wednesday that it will launch a review of business practices in the federally regulated financial sector in April.

In a statement, FCAC commissioner Lucie Tedesco expressed concern with recent allegations related to the sale of products and services by financial institutions to consumers without properly obtaining their prior express consent.

The CBC recently reported that it's been flooded with stories from employees of all five of Canada's big banks about "how they feel pressured to upsell, trick and even lie to customers to meet unrealistic sales targets and keep their jobs."

The news has fuelled calls for a parliamentary inquiry. The banks have responded in recent statements that they are acting in the best interests of their customers. The banks look forward to co-operating with the agency's review, said Terry Campbell, president of the Canadian Bankers Association.

In the first CBC program on the issue aired last week, three TD employees spoke out about feeling "incredible pressure" to meet "unrealistic" sales targets by signing customers up for unnecessary financial products.

CBC followed with another story after it received almost 1,000 emails from employees of the five banks across the country that described "the pressures to hit targets that are monitored weekly, daily and in some cases hourly," according to an article on the network's website.

Edward Jones analyst Jim Shanahan likened the situation to similar allegations facing Wells Fargo last year. In that case, the U.S. bank issued an apology and paid large penalties after regulators concluded that its employees had opened millions of unauthorized accounts and credit cards on behalf of clients.

> **It hasn't reached scandal proportions yet, but it's certainly blowing up.** Edward Jones analyst Jim Shanahan

"I can't remember ever hearing of anything of this magnitude happening in Canada," Shanahan told The Canadian Press. "It hasn't reached scandal proportions yet, but it's certainly blowing up."

Shanahan said banks are feeling intense pressure from investors to continue growing their earnings and profitability in spite of headwinds such as rock bottom interest rates and higher capital requirements. That pressure trickles down to executives and, ultimately, customer-facing sales representatives, Shanahan said.

"I don't think we've heard the worst of this yet. This is going to probably get a lot worse before it gets better."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

HOUSEHOLDS

Debt hits another record

The amount Canadians owe compared with how much they earn hit another record high last year.

Statistics Canada said the amount of household credit market debt rose to 167.3 per cent of adjusted household disposable income in the fourth quarter, up from 166.8 per cent in the third quarter.

That means there was $1.67 in credit market debt for every dollar of adjusted household disposable income.

"After slowing to a stable year-over-year pace by late-2013, growth in this debt ratio has since accelerated again alongside torrid gains in the Vancouver and Toronto housing markets," said Robert Kavcic, BMO Capital Markets senior economist.

Fuelled by mortgages and low interest rates, household debt has been climbing steadily in recent years.

Policy-makers have raised concerns about household debt and see it as a key risk to the economy.

While interest rates have been low for years, making borrowing money cheap for Canadians, some have expressed concerns about what could happen when rates rise or if there is a shock to the economy that results in a large number of job losses.

The increase in the key debt ratio came as income rose by 1.1 per cent, while household credit market debt gained 1.2 per cent.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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metro VIEW

New episode March 17 featuring Scaachi Koul and Navneet Alang

CHANTAL HÉBERT ON ALBERTA'S ABSENCE

The West fuelled the national conservative movement for decades. But no Albertans have a shot at federal leadership, so Tories are putting their hopes in the provinces.

Deepak Obhrai is the lone Albertan in the pack of 14 Conservative Party leadership candidates. THE CANADIAN PRESS

For more than 20 years, a politician from Alberta has held the leading position on one side or the other in the House of Commons. That unbroken spell will come to a halt when the federal Conservatives pick a permanent successor to Stephen Harper next May.

The conspicuous absence of an Alberta candidate in the top-tier of the crowded federal leadership field is one of the striking features of the ongoing battle for the Conservative crown.

Among the 14 candidates only Deepak Obhrai hails from the province. The longest-serving MP in Parliament is not expected to make it out of the lower tier of the pack on the Conservatives' preferential ballot.

The province's absence is conspicuous because while the party, under Harper, extended its wings in Central Canada, much of the intellectual energy that has fuelled the conservative movement over the past two decades has come from the West and in particular from Alberta.

In different ways, Ralph Klein, Preston Manning and Harper himself all had a hand at changing some of the terms of the national conversation.

If only for that reason, it is as hard to fathom a federal Conservative leadership contest that does not feature a strong Alberta contender as it is to imagine a Liberal line-up that did not boast at least one leading aspirant from Quebec.

Yet in this campaign, Saskatchewan's Andrew Scheer is the only candidate that can be described as having a serious shot at keeping the federal leadership torch in Western Canadian hands.

But to travel to Alberta as the campaign for Harper's succession enters the last stretch is also to be reminded that the battle between some of the former prime minister's presumptive heirs for the moral leadership of the Canadian right is not limited to the federal front.

Indeed, in Alberta as in Ontario, the federal front may be a secondary one.

On Saturday, Alberta's Progressive Conservatives will select a permanent replacement for the late Jim Prentice. By all accounts the result is a foregone conclusion. Former immigration minister Jason Kenney's widely expected leadership victory is only the first step on the path to reconciling the province's feuding conservative clans.

Next on the agenda is the negotiation of a mutually agreeable arrangement between the Wildrose party and the Tories and another leadership round between their respective leaders.

Kenney would like to replicate Harper's winning federal formula and take the helm of a reunited provincial party. Wildrose leader Brian Jean whose party is the official opposition in Edmonton is not inclined to hand the provincial reins to his former federal colleague without a fight.

A Mainstreet poll published this week reported that there would be room in that future contest for a compromise candidate liable to squeeze past Kenney and Jean.

On that score, a name that keeps coming up is that of Rona Ambrose. She will relinquish her position as interim leader once a permanent successor to Harper is chosen.

Conservative insiders say they would not be surprised if she left the federal arena before the House reopens next fall.

As official opposition leader since the last election, Ambrose has had a good run. If she decided to run provincially, she would not lack for support. Whether she wants to take on Kenney and Jean is anybody's guess at this juncture. It is also not a given that she would win.

But there is no doubt that the leadership of a united Alberta conservative party looks like a more attractive prize than Harper's succession.

With premier Rachel Notley's New Democrats languishing in third place in voting intentions, the provincial Conservatives can see a path back to power in Edmonton sooner rather than later.

The same is not true of their federal cousins. Their leadership campaign has been plagued by doubts as to whether any of the candidates has a shot at stopping Justin Trudeau from securing a second mandate or even at hanging on to the party's current seats.

By the time he left office, Harper towered over Canada's Conservative movement. But with conservatives in power in Manitoba and Saskatchewan and the conservative opposition leading in the polls in Ontario and Alberta, whoever succeeds the former prime minister will have to earn his or her moral authority on the Canadian right the hard way.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in Metro every Thursday.

Women have enough to do, we can't fix wage inequality alone, too

Vicky Mochama
Metro

If you're a young woman or a woman of colour, you're apparently never supposed to ask about money for work you do.

The Winnipeg-based food delivery company Skip the Dishes got into trouble when a prospective employee shared emails showing the company had cancelled her second interview after she asked about pay and benefits. The interviewee, Taylor Byrnes, actually apologized at the same time she asked, saying, "Sorry, I just thought I should ask now." (The company has since apologized and offered Byrnes the second interview.)

It's not just entry-level office jobs that don't want to pay women for their labour.

The Next Web, a tech conference held in Amsterdam this year, sent out offers for speakers including Luvvie Ajayi, a New York Times best-selling author whose book is being turned into a TV show by Shonda "I Own Primetime TV" Rhimes. Ajayi's speaking agent was told that the conference, which nets millions in sponsorships, didn't have a budget for speakers.

If she could just bounce over to Amsterdam for free, that'd be great. Ajayi turned them down.

Being a working woman is exhausting for many reasons: tights are a scam invented by Big Pantyhose, having to hold back screams when men say your own ideas back to you and well, that whole sexual harassment thing.

But one of the most exhausting things, aside from the actual work itself, is knowing that money you've earned is being kept from you.

In Byrnes' case, the company initially said that even asking about money "at such an early stage" showed that her "priorities are not in sync with those of SkipTheDishes."

In the Lean In school feminism, women are told that they're not asking for enough money (we're not), and that there's some magical combination of ways to ask successfully. The reality is that by attrition and by opacity, women are not being compensated for their labour.

We see this most starkly in industries that are most often dominated by women like nursing, caregiving, and retail. Women also make up a majority of part-time and low-income work.

It should not just be on women to do the asking, but also on companies to offer. Income transparency is one way to put a little more equity into the workforce. Three Nordic countries — Norway, Sweden and Finland — all have a version of income transparency that allows citizens to see each other's tax records. You want to know what your colleague makes? Google it, *then* negotiate.

Along with other public policy fixes such as non-transferable paid paternity leave (dads must pay their dues in the diaper mines), and gender quotas in public institutions, women in the Nordic countries are much less likely to be shortchanged for their work.

The work that women do is invaluable, but that doesn't mean it's not worth paying for.

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SUSTAINABILITY WITH STYLE HOW TO LIVE A BIODEGRADABLE LIFE

We often lament about how nothing lasts anymore. But for a new wave of biodegradable home-related items, breaking down is a good thing. "There is a pull towards being more sustainable from designers and artists, which is now gaining momentum and becoming more fashionable," says designer Spencer Jenkins, who makes furniture and sculptures that are woven, carved or steamed from wood and willow. "This needs to happen if the world as a whole is to survive." We rounded up stylish products that can be enjoyed guilt-free. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

1 Wrap and wash guilt-free

Trust the Swedes to design a **dishcloth that is not only stylish, but also 100 per cent biodegradable**. According to Marie Kanwischer, owner of SwedeThings, the Swedish dishcloth is nothing new: "These have been a household staple for over 60 years back home." Made of cellulose and cotton, the cloths are machine washable. **$7, Swedethings.ca**. Toni Desrosiers is the queen bee behind Abeego, an all-natural **food wrap made of hemp and cotton fabric** that has been coated with a combination of beeswax, tree resin and jojoba oil. It can be used to wrap food or cover a bowl. **$15 to $18, abeego.com**.

2 Brush off your plastic worries with bamboo

That plastic toothbrush sitting in your bathroom is dirty, ending up in landfills, or even worse: washing up on beaches, according to toothbrush maker Brush with Bamboo. Have a clean conscience and opt for a plant-based, **bamboo toothbrush**. BPA-free, vegan, verified non-toxic and biodegradable. **$6 Ecoexistence.ca**.

MILLENNIALS LEADING CHARGE

A 2015 Nielson survey found nearly three out of four millennials say sustainability is a shopping priority.

4 Sit back, relax on some flax

Christien Meindertsma's **flax chair** will soon be available in Canada, says a spokesperson for Label-Breed. The chair is made from flax fibres combined with PLA (polylactic acid made from sugarcane and corn starch). **$681, thomaseyck.com**.

4 Weaving willow wonders

U.K. artist Spencer Jenkins creates modern **furniture and sculptures with traditional materials such as willow**. His creations range from bespoke furniture, wall and garden sculptures to the massive willow arches he created as lead artist to celebrate the Queen's 60th Jubilee Celebrations in 2012. You can commission your own willow creation from Jenkins, who is happy to ship across the pond. **Norfolk Pebble chair, $9,799; Wall sculptures, $816 to $1143, spencerjenkins.co.uk.**

5 Throwing shade at waste

Maria Fiter of Crea-re designs eco-friendly lighting with papier-mâché to create **paper lamps** using old newspapers. Fiter's Pluto lamp was inspired by the Solar System. Each lamp is handmade. **$334, ekohunters.com**.

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Why she toned down the torture of her characters

INTERVIEW

Chevy Stevens faced criticism for writing violent scenes

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada

Chevy Stevens is hiding in her washroom. If this was a scene from one of her novels, she might be trying to escape a kidnapper, but, in reality, this is the only place Stevens can find a few minutes of quiet for this interview, away from her inquisitive four-year-old daughter.

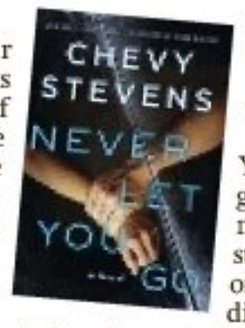
Being a mother has changed not only Stevens' life, but her approach to writing. Now that the Vancouver Island author has a kid, she's more aware of what she puts down on paper.

"I don't write about a child being hurt now, that's for sure," she says. "I have a phobia that if I wrote something about a child and something happened in my real life, I would be terrified that I brought it. I know — as if I'm godlike, or have that power — but this is a secret hidden fear and superstition."

Her latest, Never Let You Go, follows Lindsey Nash, a young mom who escapes in the dead of night from her abusive husband, Andrew. Eleven years later with her life happily re-established, she discovers that Andrew is out of prison, and although legally he must stay away from her and her now-teenage daughter Sophie, Lindsey can't shake the chilling sense she's being watched. The story switches perspectives between Lindsey's growing fears and Sophie's conflicted desire to know her father, with a giant twister of an ending.

Never Let You Go is a departure from Stevens' previous five books, all of which are set on Vancouver Island. For one, there is much less graphic physical violence, something Stevens has never shied away from since her 2010 debut, Still Missing, about a real-estate agent who is tortured in a remote cabin.

Written while Stevens was working as a realtor herself — her books often emerge out of her own fears — she sold her own home so she could focus on writing full-time. The gamble paid off: the manuscript landed Stevens an agent, a three-book publishing deal, and turned her into an international bestselling breakout star.



While Stevens' thrillers have been praised for their gripping, no-apologies storytelling and strong female protagonists, she has occasionally faced criticism over the violence inflicted on them by male characters.

"I think I was in a darker place in my own life. I just didn't want to go there anymore," she says. "I wanted to experiment with how to make something really suspenseful. I wanted to show how someone can keep you constantly scared, even if they're not doing something directly to you. How do I write a really scary book that is about physical violence, but without it being about women being abducted or murdered, or serial killers, or all those typical things?"

Although Never Let You Go is not autobiographical, Stevens admits she was influenced subconsciously by memories of her father, who died when she was 22. Like Andrew, Stevens' dad was an alcoholic, who became violent when drinking.

"He would smash or break things, and he had a lot of problems with anger. But my dad was a great guy," she says. "It's so hard to explain, even in your own mind, I still feel protective when I talk about him sometimes."

In hindsight, Stevens also directly relates to a few scenes between Sophie and Andrew, but says the parallels were unintentional.

"This isn't an agenda book," she says adamantly. "I didn't write it thinking, 'I'm going to sit down and process all these feelings about my father,' but sometimes I would step outside myself and think, 'Holy crap, I've totally been there.'"

Never Let You Go is about domestic abuse, but Chevy Stevens says it's more suspensful and less violent than her previous work.

However, Stevens did imagine while writing that some day she hopes to enjoy a tightknit relationship with her offspring, like the one between Lindsey and Sophie.

"It was my way of projecting onto the future," she says. "It is a love story, but it's a mother-daughter love story."

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

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Ethics ID: REB15-2944
This study has been approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board.

GRAPHIC NOVEL

Tough messages for people of all races

Fire!! The Zora Neale Hurston Story
By: Peter Bagge
Publisher: Drawn and Quarterly
$23.95; 104 pages

Mike Donachie
Metro | Canada

The graphic novel biographies just keep on coming, and this one is unusual.

Peter Bagge, previously best-known for underground-style cartoon work, is telling stories of remarkable lives, and his new book focuses on novelist and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston.

Her story is certainly remarkable. Refusing to fall into line with early 20th century expectations of how an African American woman should behave, Hurston rebelled in a big way. One of eight children in a Baptist family in Alabama, she battled to escape low-paid jobs and get an education, becoming the only black student at Barnard College, and then a career as a writer among New York's best.

But this book is mostly about Hurston as a character. Her determination and fierce nature are shown boldly, and racial issues, unsurprisingly, are to the fore.

"White liberalism is another form of racism," Hurston declares. "They presume I need their help to get ahead and that I 'owe' them in return."

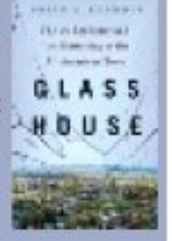
Bagge's loose, cartoony style softens the blow a little, but there are some complicated issues and tough messages for people of all races here.

GLASS LENS

Book looks at social trends

A book that examines the history of a longtime glass manufacturing company and the corresponding changes of an American city is the latest bestseller to explore economic and social trends in the U.S. through the lens of Ohio communities.

Glass House: The 1% Economy and the Shattering of the All-American Town focuses on Lancaster in central Ohio and the glass company most residents still refer to as Anchor Hocking.



Journalist author Brian Alexander, who grew up in the city, explores what happened after outside firms took over Anchor Hocking and chipped away at its local roots. The company's headquarters was closed in 1987 after Newell Corporation bought the company, and 300 office workers were fired.

"A core group of Lancaster's leadership class, and their all-important spouses, were swept away, ripping a huge hole in the social fabric of the town," Alexander writes. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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JOHANNA SCHNELLER
WHAT I'M WATCHING

Good Girls Revolt is so on the nose that it practically leaves viewers bloodied. CONTRIBUTED

Good girls who deserved better

THE SHOW: Good Girls Revolt, Season 1, Episode 1 (Amazon Prime)
THE MOMENT: Nora quits

At News of the Week magazine in 1969, young men are writers, and young women are researchers, making them look good. But new researcher Nora Ephron (Grace Gummer) wrote a story, and wants a byline.

"That's not the way we do things here," growls editor Wick McFadden (Jim Belushi).

"Your rules are dumb," Nora says. "If copy's good, it's good." Now the whole room is listening.

"Young lady, you might not want to make waves, lest we have doubts about our decision to hire you," Wick says. "Back to work, dear."

"This is ridiculous," Nora says. "I quit."

"Your name is all you have in journalism. So good luck, Nora Ephron," Wick says. He turns to another researcher. "Get me a cup of coffee, willya?"

This subject is dear to my heart. As a newbie journalist in New York 15 years later, I stood on the shoulders of these women, who risked everything to sue their employers for equal opportunity. So I wanted to love this show.

But it's so on the nose that watching it practically gives you a bloody nose from being repeatedly punched on the nose. Every scene is the same: the women do bold things, the men squash them.

And the dialog! "I'm young. I want to tiptoe through the tulips. I feel like you're putting me in a box," says insurrection leader Patti (Genevieve Angelson, perfectly cast) to her writer boyfriend.

"You're not a reporter, you're a researcher," he replies. "And we had a date." These good girls deserve better.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

A heroic stoner with burning will to belong

ISTOCK

INTERVIEW

Eden Robinson unveils a most unlikely hero in new novel

A weed cookie-dealing stoner teen may not seem like your typical hero, but the fictional high school burnout proves he's got plenty of heart in Eden Robinson's Son of a Trickster.

The coming of age novel is the first in a decade for the acclaimed writer, who grew up in Haisla territory near Kitamaat Village, B.C. Her last fiction title, Blood Sports, was published in 2006.

Son of a Trickster offers an offbeat mix of humour and heartbreak in what Robinson describes as a "screwball gothic."

The story centres on 16-year-old Jared, who is shouldering burdens most kids his age couldn't fathom.

After his parents divorce, his mom, Maggie, is struggling to pay the mortgage and keeping company with a drug-dealing boyfriend. There's also the matter of tending to his ailing dad, Phil, and helping his stepsister, Destiny, with her little one.

While trying to support his family, Jared also makes time to help his elderly neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Jaks, who cared for him while his mother was in anger management.

"(With) the earliest versions of him, what always came through was his sense of wanting to belong to a family, and creating families when he didn't have any, and not wanting to let go of any of his connections. So he would do a lot of keep them," said Robinson, whose debut novel Monkey Beach was shortlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize and the Governor General's Literary Award.

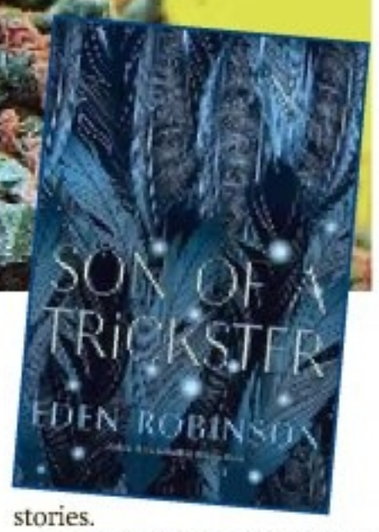
"Another part of the origin of the novel was when you're living in the small company towns you see how precarious employment can be," she added. "When everyone around you loses their job, and it's not just your family, it's your community that's kind of being shuttered when a big company closes.

"I just wanted to explore that in fiction because I don't think it's a story that's told a lot; and if it is told, it's told in passing, it's not given as much weight."

Jared maintains a loving relationship with his paternal grandmother, Nana Sophia. He receives a far chillier reception from his maternal grandmother, Anita Moody, who brands him a Wee'git, or "trickster."

While skeptical of the label, he starts to think twice when ravens start speaking to him, and he encounters elements in the supernatural world even when he's not under the influence.

Robinson's mother is Heiltsuk, but the indigenous author grew up in her Haisla dad's community where it was common for grownups to gather around the kitchen table sharing Wee'git stories.



"Wee'git in our culture is a character that teaches you about protocol, about the way we behave, about what we do, and how we related to people. But he teaches you that by breaking all the rules," Robinson said, erupting into her signature, hearty laugh.

"He's a very transgressive character. So his stories are always funny, crazy, and usually quite earthy."

Son of a Trickster is the first in a planned trilogy from Robinson. By the conclusion of the first novel, there appear to be signs that Jared's frayed familial bonds — particularly with his frosty grandmother — could be on the mend.

"The process for forgiving yourself, forgiving other people is challenging, and he's willing to do that and a lot of other people aren't. So, I thought I would explore that in fiction and see where everything went."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

He's a very transgressive character. So his stories are always funny, crazy, earthy.
Eden Robinson

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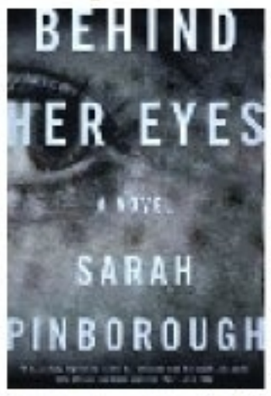
5 THRILLERS THAT YOU SHOULDN'T FEEL GUILTY ABOUT

The domestic thriller is one of life's great guilty pleasures. From a disastrous start in a new job that turns into a jaw-dropping conclusion to a house-swap gone horribly wrong or a high school girl crush with a twist, here are five promising new thrillers to get your teeth into.

SARAH MURDOCH/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

1 Behind Her Eyes



Girl walks into a pub, meets a handsome stranger, ends up having a drunken snog with him. Next day she discovers to her horror that the handsome stranger is her new boss, a psychiatrist who recently came to town. More complications: She is soon BFF with his wife, a beautiful woman with serious problems, not the least of which is her husband. This is a love-hate triangle that will end badly. Promise: Your jaw will drop when you read the final chapter. **Sarah Pinborough** is a prolific British writer and this is one of the strangest thrillers I've encountered.

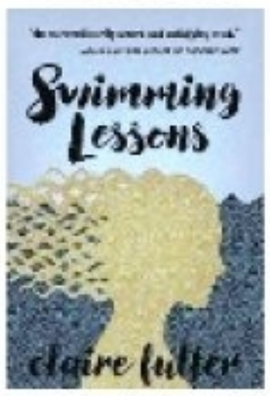
2 Her Every Fear

Kate always expects the worst to happen, and her fears are not misplaced. Recovering from a horrifying experience, she agrees to exchange her flat in London for her cousin Corbin's elegant apartment in Boston. No sooner is she there than the mutilated body of a young woman named Audrey is found in the unit next door. Did Corbin kill her before he flew to London? Or was it Alan, who has been obsessively watching Audrey through his apartment window across the courtyard? Then there's Jack, the dead woman's grieving ex. **Peter Swanson** serves up ample gore.

3 Things We Have In Common

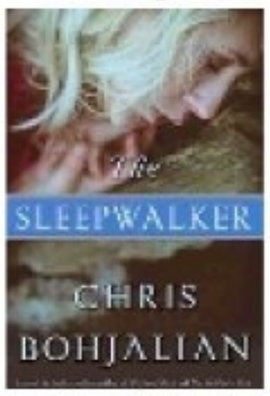
Yasmin, our unreliable narrator in **Tasha Kavanagh**'s gripping novel, is obese and 15, shunned by the cool kids at school. But she has a mission: to rescue popular Alice, on whom she has a major girl crush. She sees a man with a straggly dog watching Alice and concludes he is going to abduct her. Yasmin's plan is to learn everything she can about him so that when he makes his move she'll be ready to rescue Alice. Then two strange things happen. First, she forges something akin to friendship with the man. Second, Alice really does disappear.

4 Swimming Lessons



Flora's mum disappeared almost 12 years ago, but Flora has hung on to the belief that she's still alive. After her dad hurt himself (while chasing a woman he believed was his missing wife, Ingrid), Flora returns to look after him. She is about to discover that the essence of her absent mother is all around her: before she left (died? fled?), Ingrid wrote letters to her husband documenting the story of their marriage that she hid in the pages of their book-stuffed home. **Claire Fuller**'s first novel, Our Endless Numbered Days, was warmly received by critics and prize juries (it won the prestigious Desmond Elliott Prize).

5 The Sleepwalker



Annalee has had some close calls while sleepwalking, so when she disappears in the fall of 2000 her family — her husband, a writer, and two daughters — assumes she must have died during an unconscious nighttime foray. But her body has not been found. One of the detectives tells Lianna, Annalee's eldest daughter and the narrator of the story, that he met Annalee at the sleep clinic where they were both being treated for parasomnia; though they became friends, he adamantly denies they were ever lovers. Lianna's not sure she believes him and she certainly doesn't trust him in **Chris Bohjalian**'s 18th novel.

The historian of Canadian hip hop

MUSIC

University prof builds archive of the pioneers before Drake

Mark Campbell is sitting in a bright pink chair in the Allan Slaight Radio Institute at Toronto's Ryerson University, recounting his days as a member of a hip-hop sound crew and later, a DJ on a community radio station.

"Ryerson had no idea that one of the first hip-hop shows in Canada came out of Jorgenson Hall in the basement. That was Ron Nelson's show," says Campbell, an adjunct professor at the RTA School of Media. "That should be part of Canada's pride across the world."

Campbell is also the lead developer of a new think tank in the faculty of communication and design at Ryerson, where he will develop strategies and partnerships to promote Canadian culture.

Campbell, 38, began documenting Toronto's vibrant hip-hop scene in 2009 — the same year modern icon Drake secured his first major record deal — during research for a book on the subject. He discovered little had been written about it.

He's organized live events so artists and industry insiders can share stories and memorabilia. The historical material is being compiled online in the Northside Hip Hop Archive, a website that hosts a collection of audio, images and accounts beginning in the late '80s. It's funded by a number of partners including Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts.

This month, Campbell will talk to pioneers of hip hop in four cities across Canada during an event called I Was There, launching March 16 in Montreal

Campbell has a number of collaborators working with him on the archive, including researchers, hip-hop pioneers and teachers, who are writing lesson plans in hip hop for Grade 10 students.

"The idea with this curriculum is that we will have young people that will feel less alienated, have more civic pride, think about themselves as belonging to the city in a certain kind of way," he says.

Ron Nelson was a first-year radio and television arts student in 1983 when he began his long-running show, the Fantastic Voyage Program on CKLN.

Then, Toronto's burgeoning scene included local sound crews such as Maceo and DOC as well as Sunshine, perhaps the best-known crew, who performed with rappers Brother Different, Butch Lee and Michie Mee, Canada's first rapper to get a major U.S. record deal.

Toronto and Montreal were also major stops on the circuit in the '80s for emerging U.S. artists such as Run-D.M.C., DJ Jazzy Jeff and The Fresh Prince (actor Will Smith), and LL Cool J.

With few record stores selling black music, Nelson, now 54, says his show was one of the only places where hip-hop fans could hear new music and where the city's talent could get air time.

The radio host also became a promoter and turned his bedroom into an office so he could organize concerts. He enticed some of the best U.S. talent to travel north and battle Canadian rappers and breakdancers in events he called Monster Jams.

"Having them battle was probably the best thing for putting Canada on the map," says Nelson.

Campbell grew up in Scarborough, Ont.. MuchMusic was a "huge influence." The station's VJs "were always ensuring that we had access to the latest hip-hop music, Canadian and American."

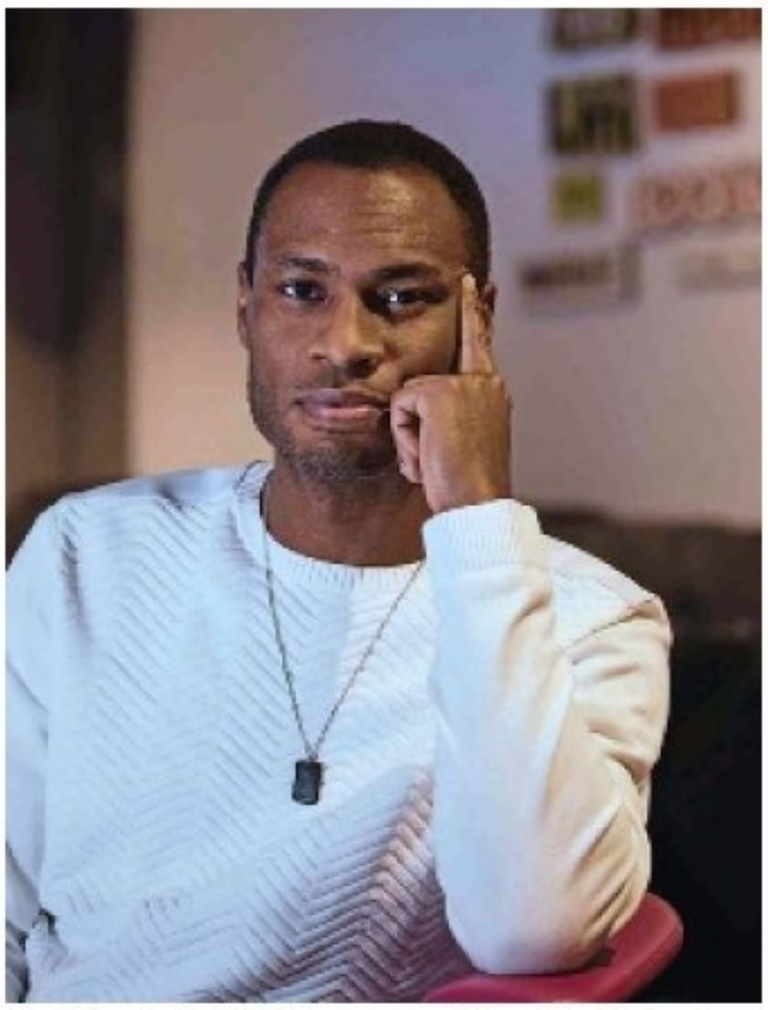
By Grade 8 he was making pause tapes — songs recorded from the radio on tapes paused during commercials — and playing them at house parties.

Performing and DJing followed. Twenty years later, Campbell is off the air. But he continues his work on hip hop with the archive, which he hopes will allow young people to "look back and say 'oh, OK, there is value to us. We did contribute to this city. We are important,'" he says.

"And that wasn't the message growing up, especially if you were involved in hip hop in the '90s in a very suburban neighbourhood," he says.

The message then was "that you don't belong here."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



Mark Campbell will talk to pioneers of Canadian hip-hop in four cities across the country this month in an event called I Was There, starting Thursday in Montreal. TORSTAR NEW SERVICE

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KIA

CULTURE

Vogue Arabia tries to find a local voice

Vogue launched its newest international edition this month, targeting a niche audience in the Middle East that is fashion conscious, style-driven and wealthy. If its debut is anything to go by, the magazine promises to be bold, representative and deferential.

The 22nd international edition of Vogue featured on its cover American supermodel Gigi Hadid, whose father is Palestinian, wearing an embellished, mesh veil covering half her face. With one eye peering out from beneath the veil, the magazine's cover words aimed readers directly at its mission: "Reorienting perceptions."

At the helm of Vogue's nascent project is Deena Aljuhani Abdulaziz; a fashion-forward mother of three and Saudi royal who describes herself as "ambitious".

"I don't want Vogue Arabia to just be another regional magazine. I definitely want it to be a global one as well, especially in this political climate. I think it's very important," she said.

Through its range of features, the magazine attempts to cater to a wide and diverse audience of Arab women, whose varying takes on personal style and modesty cannot be defined by one trope or fashion statement.

While not intentionally provocative, there are images of women in backless gowns and skirts that end above the knee. There are also artful shots of women in headscarves, though not necessarily worn in the parameters of the Islamic hijab.

In Hadid's cover shot, for example, the veil reveals a hint of bronzed shoulder.

"We aren't trying to make a giant political statement but we do think that we can help contribute to conversation" said Shashi Menon, founder of Nervora, which published Vogue Arabia in partnership with Conde Naste.

Gigi Hadid graces the first cover of Vogue Arabia. VOGUE

"We want to be — delicate is the wrong word, but we want to be cognizant on how we are speaking to and with women from this region and that means being understanding," he said.

Vogue Arabia's strongest foothold is — as its name suggests — in the oil-rich countries of the Arabian Peninsula, where modern malls and a growing art scene are part of a wider push to get in on the multi-billion-dollar-a-year global fashion industry, which is currently dominated by the U.S., Europe and Japan.

Vogue Arabia's target audience is well-travelled and has long had access to fashion magazines, both local and international, including of course American Vogue.

Vogue Arabia launched digitally first last fall, but its print edition went out this month with 35,000 copies. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A not so clear-cut trend

FASHION

Why a little less denim is causing a whole lot of debate

Nichole Jankowski
For Metro | Toronto

They are the jeans that launched a thousand tweets.

Described as "clear panel mom jeans" on Topshop's website, these pants are fast fashion at its best, or worst, depending on your outlook.

An amalgamation of trends — high-waisted, translucent, ripped, patched, cropped and stone washed — all colliding in a single item. They look like Topshop has replaced its designers with algorithms. But they're also a beautiful mashup of our times.

The "cool clear knee panel detail" are the perfect windows to show off your fishnet tights, which are currently being worn under jeans thanks to Kim Kardashian and the rest of the clan. They're also winter-weather appropriate ripped denim.

Sold under Topshop's Moto private label, they are being carried at Nordstrom in the States and Hudson's Bay in Canada.

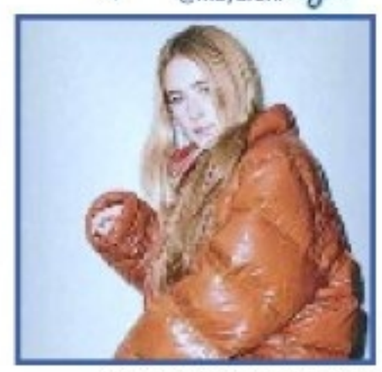
Yesterday, they caught the attention of the Internet in a big way and has mainstream media asking "but why?" or whether these pants are a sign of the end times.

But here at Metro we're not interested in the reason, just your reaction.

HANDOUT

I live in a city where it rains constantly so I'm down for the knee windshield. And when they steam up you could squiggle messages onto them like a bathroom mirror.
Leila Bani, Vancouver, stylist and art director
@leilareira

I'm all for mom jeans — they're definitely the most flattering fit for a woman with curves. But the knees are the most boring part of the leg. In my opinion, expose the butt or the crotch, they're much more worthy of attention.
Maya Fuhr, Toronto, photographer
@mayafuhr



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metro HOME

Your essential daily news

Listed in 2015 for $17M, Jennifer Lopez's Hidden Hills mansion finally sells for $9.9M

MEET THE CONDO

Find enlightenment in pet-friendly homes

Zen Townhomes

CONTRIBUTED

Project overview

This project features contemporary elevations with vibrant jewel-toned siding and beautiful laminate flooring throughout the main floor. These affordable and stylish homes are priced to sell and are perfect for families.

Housing amenities

These pet-friendly townhomes have basements available for development and individually fenced backyards with laminate flooring through main floor, stainless steel kitchen appliance package and a washer and dryer.

Location and transit

Redstone is a popular community in the northeast. A future LRT station will be a short walk from our the site that already has access to the Calgary International Airport, CrossIron Mills, Stoney and Deerfoot Trails and more.

In the neighbourhood

Redstone is ideally located near ample greenspace and parks that include fitness equipment for the whole family. Redstone is a neighborhood built around what matter most to families with two sites for new schools, shopping and a future LRT station.

KRISTA SYLVESTER/FOR METRO

NEED TO KNOW

What: Zen Townhomes
Builder: Avalon Master Builder
Location: Redstone
Building: Fifty-six pet-friendly, two-storey townhomes
Sizes: From 1,149 to 1,818 square feet (if basement development is selected)
Model: Two, three, four or five bedrooms
Pricing: Starting at $299,900 into the mid-$300,000's
Status: Breaking ground in March
Sales centre: Red Embers Row in Redstone
Hours: Monday to Wednesday 2 to 8 p.m., weekends and holidays 12 to 5 p.m.
Phone: (403) 585-6866
Email: kpavlenko@avalon-masterbuilder.com
Website: zeninbalance.com

REAL ESTATE

What's hot on the market

1 NOW SELLING

The Ashford of Altadore: The Ashford of Altadore features an intimate collection of 18 unique townhomes with beautiful interiors, timeless architecture, private yards and detached garages. Visit the presentation gallery at 3620 16th St. SW.

2 MOVE-IN READY THIS SPRING

Avenue West End by Grosvenor and Cressey: These sleek one and two bedroom condos feature engineered hardwood flooring, marble details and in-floor heating. Visit the presentation centre at 1037 5th Ave. SW.

3 STILL SELLING

Victory & Venture in Bridgeland: With a rooftop patio you can even use in the winter, these two bedroom, two bathroom condos are located right in the heart of Bridgeland. Check out the discovery centre at Edmonton Trail and 4th Avenue NE.

KRISTA SYLVESTER/FOR METRO

Reconsidering the humble garage

DESIGN

More than a home for cars, it's a place to also tinker

Silicon Valley started in the Palo Alto, Calif., garage of the Packard family, where Hewlett-Packard was founded, according to the National Register of Historic Places. Steve Jobs launched Apple in his parents' garage. And dozens of American bands started in garages. Amazon, Disney, Google, Harley-Davidson? All famously launched out of garages.

Garages have, for generations, been places for tinkering and creating, where kids build soapbox-derby cars or refinish kayaks. Some garages are home to small catering kitchens or extensive wine collections, and many feature extra refrigerators or freezers. And of course, they often serve as a deep storage and workshop space.

Designers and architects say the idea of the garage as the ultimate multi-purpose room is alive and well, and that modern garages are finally being seriously retooled to better suit those myriad uses.

"When it comes to garage design, functionality is always key. I'm seeing a lot more glass garage doors, whether frosted or clear. It's more fitting for most modern homes, and makes the space more versatile because it lets in the light," said Jonathan Savage of Nashville-based Savage Interior Design.

"A car collector might want to park in a garage every day to protect their investments, but I store my wine in my garage," he said.

Raw concrete floors are out, frequently replaced by more versatile epoxy or modular rubber flooring, designers say.

"Clients want a floor that can be easily cleaned and mopped, like any other room in the house," Savage said.

The facade of the garage door, a focal point of a panelized house designed by Minarc, was created with scrap pieces of wood and left over quartz from the interior countertops. The house is featured in the book Prefabulous Small Houses by Sheri Koones. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

And if the garage has windows, he includes window treatments that match those in other parts of the house. Storage units on wheels can be easily rearranged in a pinch, he says, and some garages include not just refrigerators but kitchenettes.

Margaret Mayfield, an architect living in Los Osos, Calif., keeps her washer and dryer in the garage, with most of the floor reserved as a workspace for refinishing furniture and other tinkering projects. Her family's three cars are parked in the driveway, never in the garage.

"You're supposed to keep your cars in the garage, but I hardly know anyone who does," said David Hirsch, a partner at Urban Architectural Initiatives who splits his time between California and New York City.

"My neighbour uses his for woodworking projects, and my daughter uses hers as a sort of casual space and playroom for the kids. And for deep storage. I guess that's another common use for garages," he said.

Even the carport Hirsch designed for his own Palo Alto, Calif., home — a steel framework over a gravel driveway — goes unused, he said.

Sheri Koones, author of Prefabulous Small Houses (Taunton, 2016) and other books on home building, says garage doors are getting more attention these days.

"Individualizing a garage door makes the entire house look much more interesting," she said, citing a recently constructed house in Santa Monica, Calif., where leftover strips of orange kitchen counter were used to build a striking and artistic garage door.

"They purchased a garage door without siding, laid it all out in the driveway and, using scraps from the construction, really made a gorgeous piece of art," she said. "They made it into so much more than just an ordinary garage door. It's the most beautiful garage door I've seen anybody do, and it adds so much to the look of the whole house."

Koones also said there is greater demand now for good ventilation in garages, for built-in fittings to facilitate organization, and for garages that are separate from the rest of the house, as opposed to attached garages.

"The garage is such a useful and important space in American culture, and making optimal use of it is much cheaper and more convenient than renting an extra space somewhere," said Hirsch.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Frosted doors on the garage of architect Margaret Mayfield in Los Osos, Calif. help let the light in. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AROMA

Welcome spring into your home with stovetop potpourri

If you've had enough of winter and long for a warm-ish spring day when you can open up the windows and let some fresh air inside, you aren't alone.

Scented candles and room fresheners are popular ways to try to mask stale air. These products often contain ingredients that can be irritating for many people.

"Stovetop simmer pots are essentially an old-fashioned diffuser," says Natacha Rey, founder of Maison Apothecare, an all-natural products retailer based in Oakville, Ont.

Rey has developed a line of home and personal care products that are naturally scented using pure essential oils. Rey's oils sell for $25 a bottle — but it's also possible to make your own for a few dollars. It's as simple as throwing a few fresh ingredients into a pot on the stove.

We've been experimenting in the kitchen and have come up with three recipes to help make your home smell like spring using a stovetop potpourri made from citrus fruits and herbs simmering in a pot of water.

The technique is easy: throw the ingredients into a pot, add enough water to cover them, bring to a boil, then turn down the heat and simmer away.

Lemon, rosemary, vanilla

The ingredients create a lemony, woodsy aroma. Hint: Vanilla extract gives a bolder scent than the pod.

- 3 slices of lemon (you could also opt for lemon peel)
- 2 sprigs of fresh rosemary
- A few drops of vanilla extract (you could also add a piece of a vanilla pod)

Grapefruit, lemon thyme, cardamom

This blend was inspired by a cocktail. Grapefruit is known to be uplifting, energizing and invigorating. As its name implies, lemon thyme also has a slightly citrusy scent. Cardamom is aromatic and has a warming effect.

- 3 slices of grapefruit (you could also opt for just the peel)
- 2 sprigs of fresh lemon thyme
- 4 crushed cardamom pods (opt for 6 for a stronger scent)

Lime, mint, lemongrass

Lime and citrus make this combination like a mojito for your senses. Mint is known to have a cooling effect and the scent of lemongrass is calming.

- 3 slices of lime (you could also opt for lime peel)
- 2 sprigs of fresh mint
- A four-inch (10 cm) piece of sliced lemongrass

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Banish stale air and food smells. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TOP 150 150
CELEBRATING CANADA'S GIFTS TO THE WORLD

10 sports stars for the ages

SPORTS

Canadian athletes make their mark in history books

Rhonda Riche

Canada has produced its share of sport superstars, but only a few have changed the rules of the game. Here's a list of the Great White North's greatest athletes.

1 Patrick Chan
A two-time Olympic silver medalist, three-time world champion and nine-time Canadian champion, Chan has stayed on top of the figure-skating scene for more than a decade and has wowed audiences and fellow competitors with his big jumps.

2 Shirley and Sharon Firth
As members of the first Canadian women's cross-country ski team at the Sapporo Olympics in 1972, twin sisters Shirley and Sharon Firth, members of the Gwich'in First Nation, were among the first Aboriginal athletes to represent Canada at the Olympics and the first to be inducted into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame.

3 Nancy Greene
Greene won the first ever World Cup ski race in 1967 and took home the gold at the Winter Olympic Games in Grenoble, France, in 1968. She also popularized the sport of downhill skiing through her schools. In 1999, Greene was named Canada's female athlete of the century.

4 Wayne Gretzky
His nickname, "The Great One," pretty much sums up Wayne Gretzky's career in hockey. Only one of his 61 records has been broken since he retired in 1999.

5 Clara Hughes
In the history of the Olympics, only four athletes have won medals in both the summer and winter games. Hughes is one of them, capturing bronze in Individual Road Race Cycling and Individual Time Trial Cycling (Atlanta, 1996) and 5,000 m Speed Skating (Salt Lake City, 2002).

6 Ferguson Jenkins
The Chicago Cubs' pitching legend Fergie Jenkins was the first Canadian to win the Cy Young Award, as well as the country's first baseball Hall of Fame member. In the off-season, he played basketball with the Harlem Globetrotters from 1967 to 1969.

7 Silken Laumann
In May 1992, just 10 weeks before the Olympic Games, rower Laumann was injured in a brutal rowing accident that left her right leg shattered. Twenty-seven days later, she made the greatest comeback in Canadian sports history, winning the bronze medal for Canada.

8 Tom Longboat
In the early 20th century, the Onondaga-Canadian was the dominant long-distance runner of the age. After winning the 1907 Boston Marathon, he became so popular that people bought tickets to watch him compete in indoor races.

9 Steve Nash
Eight-time NBA All-Star and two-time league MVP, Nash is considered one of the sport's greatest point guards. At the same time, he received the Order of Canada and the Walter Kennedy Citizenship Award for his community work with the Steve Nash Foundation, a charity aimed at helping "underserved children" in British Columbia and around the world.

10 Gilles and Jacques Villeneuve
This father and son team are Canada's most famous auto racers. While Gilles won only six events before his untimely death, his racing was legendary. Jacques has won a PPG Indy Car World Series Championship and Indianapolis 500 and is the only Canadian to have won a Formula One World Championship.

Clara Hughes.

Wayne Gretzky. ALL PHOTOS TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

THIS SPECIAL REPORT WAS CREATED BY CONTENT SOLUTIONS, INDEPENDENT OF METRO EDITORIAL.

metro SPORTS

Tim Tebow had his best day with the Mets singling twice and making a diving catch in Wednesday's 6-2 loss to the Marlins

10 and done: Flames' winning streak busted

NHL

Calgary feels absence of starting goalie Johnson

Brad Marchand scored his league-leading 36th goal of the season and David Backes returned after getting hurt to score the game-winner as the Boston Bruins defeated Calgary 5-2 on Wednesday to end the Flames' 10-game winning streak.

Backes got tied up with Flames defenceman Mark Giordano and taken into the corner boards 12 minutes into the game. He was favouring his leg as he was helped off the ice.

At Saddledome

5	2
BRUINS	FLAMES

Patrice Bergeron of the Bruins crashes into Flames goalie Chad Johnson at Scotiabank Saddledome on Wednesday night. JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

But he returned seven minutes into the second period and on his second shift back he broke a 2-2 deadlock. Backes took a pass from David Krejci on a 3-on-2 and from 30 feet out whipped a wrist shot over the glove of Chad Johnson.

David Pastrnak, with two, and Matt Beleskey also scored for Boston (38-26-6). The Bruins' fourth straight win moves them to within three points of the second-place Ottawa Senators in the Atlantic Division.

Alex Chiasson and Dougie Hamilton each scored for the Flames (39-27-4).

One of the best players during Calgary's franchise record-tying win streak had been goaltender Brian Elliott. He had nine of the victories, and in those nine appearances had a 1.74 goals-against average and a .943 save percentage.

However, Elliott woke up with the flu Wednesday morning and was told to stay home. Johnson got the start instead, with Jon Gillies called up from Stockton to be the back-up.

Elliott's absence was felt.

Pastrnak's first goal at 11:47 of the first slipped through Johnson's pads to tie the game 1-1.

Marchand's goal 6:04 into the second, that gave the Bruins a 2-1 lead, was a bad misplay by Johnson, who failed to catch a puck lobbed towards the net by Colin Miller, enabling Marchand to corral the rebound and fire it into the vacated net.

While Johnson would want that goal back, same could be said for Anton Khudobin on Hamilton's goal just 1:10 later. From about 70 feet away, the Flames defenceman beat the Boston goaltender with a wrister over his pad. THE CANADIAN PRESS

COURT

- A U.S. district court upheld an arbitrator's ruling that Calgary Flames defenceman Dennis Wideman's suspension for knocking a linesman to the ice in a game last season.
- The NHL initially suspended Wideman for 20 games but neutral discipline arbitrator James Oldham ruled that Wideman did not intend to injure linesman Don Henderson and reduced the suspension to 10 games.

HOCKEY WAGE GAP

U.S. could boycott worlds

The Canadian women's hockey team can only watch and wait to see if they'll play chief rival United States in the world championship on American ice.

The U.S. women declared Wednesday they'll boycott the worlds starting March 31 in Plymouth, Mich., unless progress is made in a wage dispute with USA Hockey.

American players say they will not report next Wednesday to training camp without steps towards a new contract.

A few hours after that bombshell dropped, Canadian players on a conference call were still trying to get their heads around the possibility the host country and defending champion could be absent from the biggest tournament this calendar year.

"It is difficult to imagine but we respect their decision."
Canada's Lauriane Rougeau

Canada is scheduled to open the tournament against the U.S. on March 31.

Canada and the U.S. have met in every world championship final dating back to the first in 1990. The Americans have won three straight titles.

"To voluntarily take ourselves out of the running to (repeat) is not easy, but it's what's right and we're asking for what's right and fair," U.S. forward Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

Mason, Flyers keep lid on Pens offence

Wayne Simmonds scored the 200th goal of his career and Steve Mason made 23 saves to lead the Philadelphia Flyers to a 4-0 victory over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Wednesday night.

Sean Couturier, Claude Giroux and Dale Weise also scored for the Flyers, who closed within five points of the idle New York Islanders for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference. Making the post-season remains a long shot for Philadelphia with just 13 games remaining and four teams to pass.

WEDNESDAY In Philly

4	0
FLYERS	PENGUINS

Philadelphia snapped a three-game losing streak while handing the defending Stanley Cup champions their fourth shutout of the season. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Federer wins latest battle in rivalry with Nadal

Roger Federer defeated Rafael Nadal 6-2, 6-3 at the BNP Paribas Open on Wednesday in a fourth-round match that saw the longtime rivals meeting much earlier in a tournament than usual.

Federer broke Nadal four times in advancing to the quarter-finals in just over an hour. Although Nadal owns a 23-13 lead in their series, Federer has won the past three in a row. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC

Gonzales critical of unclear rules

Adrian Gonzalez had some harsh words for organizers of the World Baseball Classic.

"They're trying to become the World Cup, but they're not even close to being the Little League World Series," the Los Angeles Dodgers first baseman said Wednesday.

Gonzalez's Mexican team beat Venezuela 11-9 Sunday, leaving both teams tied with Italy for second in Group D behind Puerto Rico (3-0). The World Baseball Classic Twitter account initially announced Monday's tie-breaker game would be between Mexico and Italy. But the technical committee determined the tie-breaker — runs allowed per defensive inning — meant Italy (1.05) and Venezuela (1.11) advanced and not Mexico (1.12). THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Adrian Gonzalez
GETTY IMAGES

$1,000

According to a statement from a law firm representing players, USA Hockey has paid players $1,000 a month during their six-month Olympic residency period and "virtually nothing" the rest of the time.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Pep casts glare at Man City front line

Rather than blaming his defence for conceding soft goals, Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola pointed to a lack of aggression and personality as decisive factors in his side's 3-1 defeat to Monaco in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Turning around a 5-3 deficit from the first leg appeared to be a tall order for Monaco, but instead it looked too easy as the home side cruised into a 2-0 lead within 30 minutes and then quickly responded to City's brief second-half push to reach the quarter-finals on away goals.

Monaco was given far too much space throughout and attacked in waves.

"It's not about the defence. Our strikers have to be aggressive and pick the ball up, but we didn't. That's why we are out," Guardiola said referring to his forward trio of Sergio Aguero, Kevin De Bruyne and Raheem Sterling.

> **We wanted to show personality, we forgot to do that in the first half.**
> Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola

"Our strength is to be aggressive without the ball. We were a little bit slow in everything," Guardiola said.

Monaco's third and decisive goal came from a very British-looking set piece, as midfielder Tiemoue Bakayoko rose to head home Thomas Lemar's curling cross in the 77th minute. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GETTY IMAGES

IN BRIEF

Spurs Aldridge gets all clear

LaMarcus Aldridge's latest bout with heart arrhythmia kept him out less than a week, a big relief to the five-time All-Star as he and the San Antonio Spurs chase the Golden State Warriors for the top seed in the Western Conference.

Aldridge was cleared to play and was expected to be in the lineup on Wednesday against Portland, the Spurs announced. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pats re-sign Hightower

The Patriots have re-signed Pro Bowl linebacker Dont'a Hightower. Hightower's agency tweeted the agreement on Wednesday and his agent confirmed it. The new pact is for four years and $43.5 million.

It brings back one of the Patriots' biggest free agents, who has helped New England win two Super Bowls in his five NFL seasons. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canadians set sights on title with Ducks

MARCH MADNESS

Trio has helped Oregon earn third seed in Midwest Region

Dylan Ennis, centre, and Dillon Brooks led the Oregon Ducks to the Elite Eight last year.
THOMAS BOYD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Before Senior Day tipped off last month at the University of Oregon, Ducks fans stood for O Canada.

The Canadian anthem played that day in support of two of the team's seniors — Dylan Ennis and Chris Boucher. Add in Pac 12 player of the year Dillon Brooks and the trio of Canadians have been the cornerstone this season of one of best teams in NCAA basketball.

"There's a lot of respect for it and you see it around the fans of the teams that have Canadians, they often embrace the Canadian aspect," said Ennis's dad Tony McIntyre, who was in the crowd at Matthew Knight Arena for Senior Day.

It's become a common storyline: Canadians playing key roles down south. And once again, a cast of talented Canadians will follow in the footsteps of the likes of Tristan Thompson, Cory Joseph, Andrew Wiggins and Jamal Murray into March Madness.

"I think it's great, great for basketball in Canada that's for sure," McIntyre said.

McIntyre and wife Suzette Ennis will be in Sacramento on Friday, when the Ducks open against 14th-seeded Iona.

Oregon went 29-5 in the regular season to finish co-champions of the Pac 12. A No. 1 seed in the NCAA tournament last season, they're seeded third in the Midwest Region this year after losing to Arizona in Saturday's Pac 12 final. That game came hours after learning Boucher was done for the season, having torn his ACL the previous night.

Regardless of who's missing, and where they're seeded, Brooks said the Ducks' goal remains unchanged.

"National championship," he said. "It's the same tournament, we're all here for the same thing, to win, and wherever we're at we're competitors, we're confident in ourselves, and wherever we're at we're ready to play."

Brooks, a 21-year-old from Mississauga, Ont., led the Ducks to an appearance in the Elite Eight last season. The six-foot-six guard averaged 16.0 a game this season, bouncing back from what could have been a devastating broken foot suffered in the off-season.

"He's just a very high energy, highly active, very skilled scorer," said McIntyre, who worked with Brooks in CIA Bounce, the AAU program he co-founded. "He goes out and changes the pace of the game, does what his team needs, and that's to score and get buckets." THE CANADIAN PRESS

DEEP RUN

Oregon is gunning for its first Final Four appearance since 1939.

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MAKE IT TONIGHT

Crispy Sweet Potato Fries

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

We think dinner sides should be as important (and as delicious) as the main event. If you're looking for a healthier update on everyone's salty addiction, then these sweet potato fries are your ticket to crispiness.

Ready in 40 minutes
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 3 medium Sweet Potatoes
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 Tbsp sugar
- 1 Tbsp salt
- 1 Tbsp Chinese 5-spice

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Peel and slice sweet potatoes into match sticks. Lay them flat on that cut side and make thin strips. Then turn those strips on their sides and cut into more fine slices. (The skinnier you make them, the crisper they're going to be.)

2. Mix your spices in a large bowl. Pour oil over the spice blend and combine well. Throw in your potatoes and toss until they're completely covered. Lay them out in a single layer on a cookie sheet. Use two sheets if they're looking crowded.

3. Place in a hot oven and bake for 25 to 30 minutes. Take out at the 15-minute mark and turn them over with tongs or a spatula. Keep an eye on them at the end as the edges will char (not that that's a bad thing).

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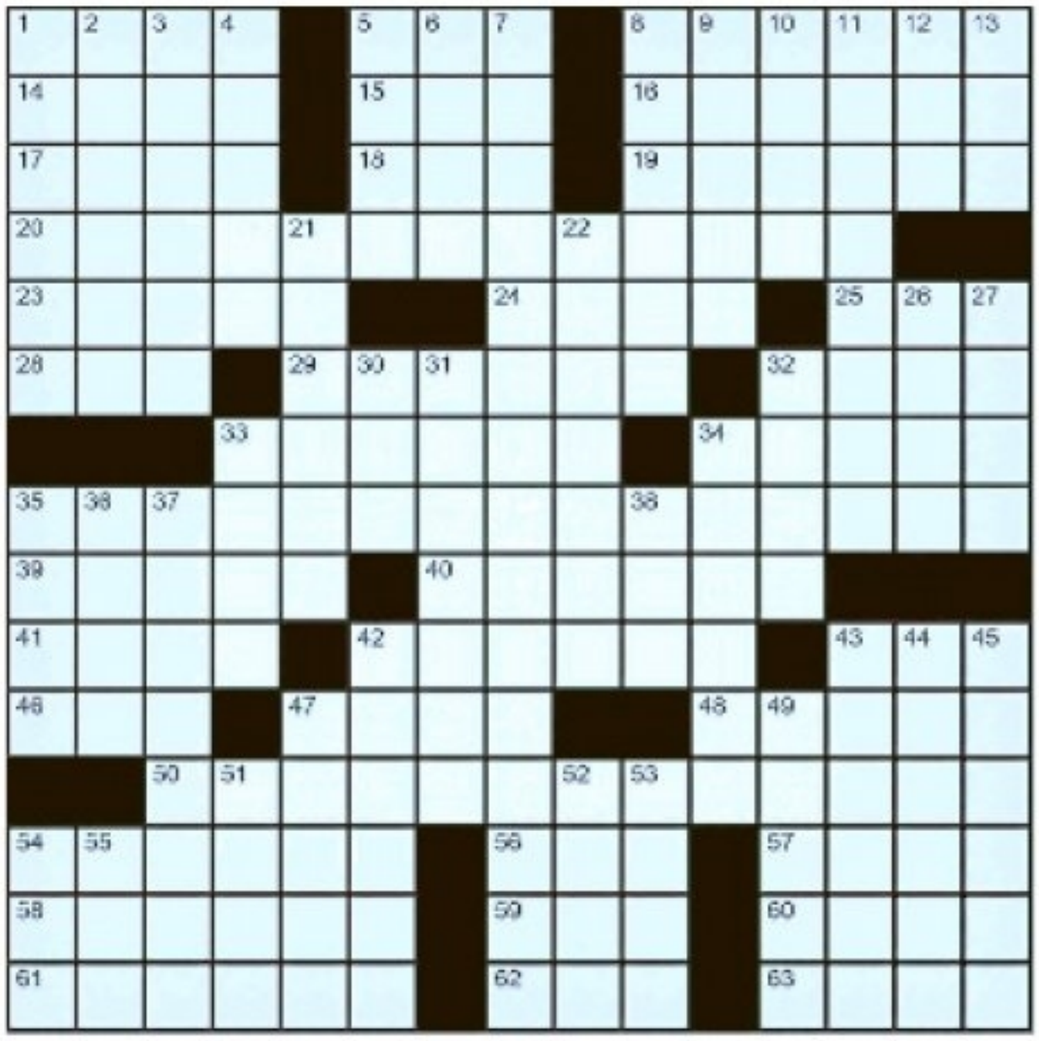
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Celebrity
5. Descriptive wd.
8. Novelist Ms. Jong's
14. Barge __ (Intrude)
15. Mr. Rawls
16. Opera: The Three _
17. Literature governess Jane
18. NB's ocean
19. Ms. Sevigny's
20. Moist-soil-liking tree sometimes found in southern Ontario: 3 wds.
23. Country singer Ms. Tucker
24. Single-named Art Deco designer
25. Canadian comic Mr. Green
28. Group of Seven painter Mr. Jackson, et al.
29. Relating to digestion
32. Magic spell
33. Melon coming from the name of the former name of Turgutlu, a town in Turkey
34. Tom of "The Dukes of Hazzard"
35. Lester B. Pearson won the Nobel Peace Prize for his diplomacy in de-escalating this 1956 dilemma in Egypt: 3 wds.
39. Assuage
40. US Supreme Court Justice Ms. Kagan's
41. Omaha, __.
42. Navy titles, e.g.: 2 wds.
43. Jolly: French
46. Racing's Mr. Fabi
47. Prefix to 'matic'
48. Fashionable accessory
50. Regina's beautiful park: 2 wds.
54. Attribute
56. Post-op locale
57. Norwegian king
58. Make the shower watertight: 2 wds.
59. Switz.'s continent
60. Fork prong
61. Enthusiastic
62. Position
63. __'acte (Intermission)

DOWN
1. Party with a pinata
2. Regardless/nonetheless
3. "Happy Days" star Erin's
4. Foe
5. "There ought to be __ against that!"
6. Shakespearean verb
7. Shakespeare-inspired architectural features: 2 wds.
8. "Yada, Yada...": 2 wds.
9. Till again
10. "To Live and Die __ __" (1985)
11. Stove surfaces
12. "__ you sure?" (Positive?)
13. Initials-sharers of the director of "E.T." (1982)
21. The Pope's office
22. Tested, as a product before going to market, say
26. __, California (The Bionic Woman's hometown)
27. Bons __ (Witticisms)
30. That, in Spain
31. Leon __ (CIA director from 2009 to 2011)
32. Mars, par example
33. Russian ruler
34. Powerfully-toothed tropical fish
35. Filmmaker, Gus Van __
36. Movie beekeeper
37. Sports protection: 2 wds.
38. Montreal-headquartered train co.
42. Aglow
43. Country star Larry
44. Unmitigated
45. By any chance at all: 2 wds.
47. Sean of 'LOTR' movies
49. $100 bill, fun-style
51. Tolkien character, __ the Smith
52. Missed __ (Thespian's mistake)
53. Abrupt
54. "This __ surprise!"
55. Sea: French

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Please remember that this is a wonderful year for partnerships for you. It's a great year for Aries to get married. This also includes entering into a business partnership.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
This year is the best year in over a decade for you to get a better job or improve your existing job. Likewise, it's the best year in over a decade to improve your health.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Plan on fun holidays this year, because this is a great time to take vacations, explore the arts, be active in sports and enjoy playful activities with children.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
It's important to know that this is the year to create your dream home. You can either improve your existing home or get a better home. It's an excellent time for real-estate investments.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You are in such a positive frame of mind this year. You will succeed in whatever you do, because you believe in yourself. This is how the power of positive thinking works!

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Look for ways to boost your earnings, because you can do it. In fact, this is the best year in over a decade for you to make more money. Yahoo!

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Lucky you! For the first time since 2005, lucky Jupiter is in your sign. This brings you good fortune and contentment for the whole year. It won't happen again until 2028.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
This year, different experiences will occur that will enrich your spiritual life. Your belief will be stronger, and this in turn will give you more confidence in your future.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
This is a popular year for Sagittarians! However, it's important to know that your interactions with others will benefit you. Join clubs and groups. Be friendly!

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You can put your name up in lights this year, because your reputation will shine. You will earn the respect of your peers.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Not since 2005 have you had the travel opportunities you will have this year. Make plans to go places! It's a great year for school and education as well.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
This is the perfect year to get a mortgage or loan, because you can benefit from the wealth and resources of others. Financial negotiations will settle in your favour.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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9				4		5	1	
	8		2					

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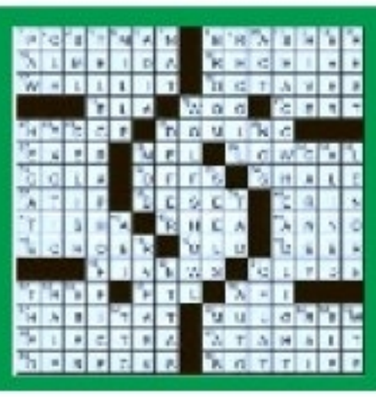

7	2	6	1	8	4	3	5	9
9	4	1	3	2	5	6	7	8
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3	1	2	7	4	6	9	8	5
6	5	7	8	9	3	1	4	2
1	3	9	4	7	8	5	2	6
2	7	8	6	5	9	4	3	1
4	6	5	2	3	1	8	9	7

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